

From Walney to Wyre



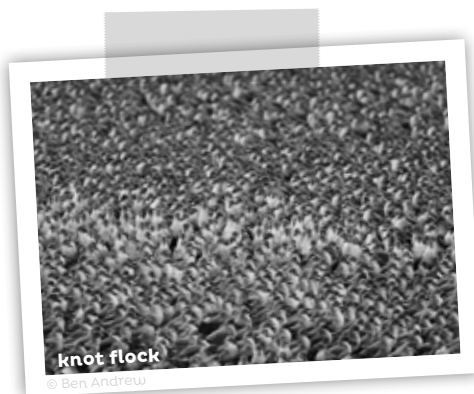
Welcome to Morecambe Bay, the largest intertidal estuary in the UK. Shining sandbanks, vast mudflats and constantly changing channels are alive with the sights and sounds of flocks of waders.

The surrounding saltmarshes, tidal islands, hidden beaches and low cliffs give way to limestone headlands and escarpments, undulating grasslands, woodlands, low-lying mosses and rivers with the backdrop of the fells and moors beyond.

Don't Miss...

There's so much to see and many hidden corners to explore, but these top 3 highlights are not to be missed!

- 1 Getting close to nature at one of our nature reserves**
- 2 Breathtaking views from our coastal headlands and limestone hills**
- 3 Watching birds feed and roost with the rhythm of the tides**



In this guide you will find...

- **Seasonal highlights**
- **Top nature spots**
- **How to get around**

Fascinating fact

The Bay is internationally important for migratory birds that feed on its mollusc rich mud and sand. It sits along the East Atlantic Flyway, a route that birds take when moving between Scandinavia, Europe and Africa for breeding and overwintering. It provides a perfect haven and seafood bar for over 225,000 birds that pass through each winter.

Seasonal Highlights

This area is full of wildlife, with something spectacular and different to see whatever the time of year:

SPRING

Early marsh and bee orchids at Sandscale Haws National Nature Reserve, hawfinch at Sizergh Castle, and avocets at Leighton Moss nature reserve.

SUMMER

Rare butterflies around Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, dragonflies at Heysham, Leighton Moss, Meathop and Roudsea nature reserves and sea lavender at coastal reserves along the Wyre estuary and Walney Island.

AUTUMN

Fascinating bearded tits and starling murmurations at Leighton Moss nature reserve, oystercatcher and knot along Morecambe promenade, and red deer rutting around Whitbarrow.

WINTER

Curlew and other birds from viewing hides at South Walney, Leighton Moss and Rossall Point, or along a coastal walk at Cockerham, Glasson Docks, Morecambe, Arnside and Grange over Sands.

Many habitats here are so special they are protected internationally or nationally. Some species are so rare that Morecambe Bay is one of only a few places, or the only place, you can see them. Look out for Lancastrian whitebeam, Walney geranium, Teesdale violet, lady's slipper orchid, pearl bordered fritillaries, high brown fritillary and belted beauty moth.

Other important wildlife includes the natterjack toad, bittern, seals, red deer and the otter.

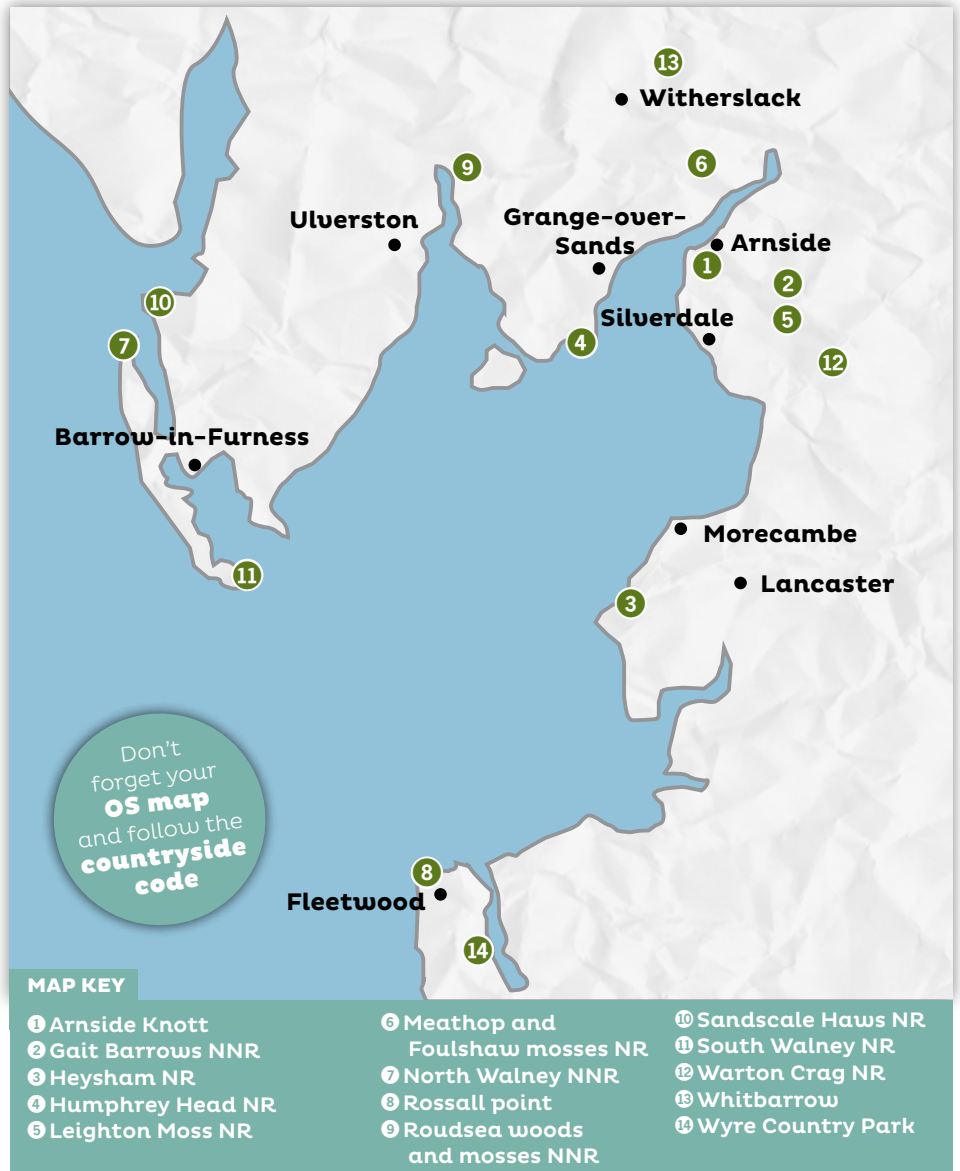
Wildlife Watchers

If you are keen wildlife watcher, you'll find some rare and unusual species here. These are our top sites for truly unique viewing:

- 1** Brush up on your orchid ID at Gait Barrows and Sandscale Haws National Nature Reserves and Arnside Knott and Humphrey Head nature reserve, where lady's slipper, bee, fly, green winged, early purple, pyramidal and early marsh orchid can be found.
- 2** Look out for marsh harriers hunting prey above the reeds at Leighton Moss nature reserve and osprey over the mosses at Foulshaw and Roudsea nature reserves.
- 3** Warton Crag, Arnside Knott and Whitbarrow nature reserves are great places to see the rare northern brown argus, high brown fritillary and other fritillary butterflies.

For those new to nature spotting, there are plenty of impressive sites and species that are easy to find and will capture your imagination. Here's our pick of the 3 best sites for beginners:

- Watch the seals playing in the surf around lighthouse bay and on the beaches at the end of South Walney nature reserve
- Start at the visitor centre at Leighton Moss nature reserve to find out what birds, dragonflies and plants you can find as you explore the walkways between the reedbeds and saltmarshes.
- See a live showcase of the thousands of oystercatcher, knot and curlew that visit here



at Arnside, Morecambe, and Grange Promenades a couple of hours before or after high tide.

For more ideas on how to discover nature on your doorstep around Morecambe Bay, read on and download the series of nine nature guides that show you when and where you can enjoy our wonderful wildlife at www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover.



Barrow -in-Furness

Explore Barrow -in-Furness where beaches, islands and ancient woodlands meet fascinating industries of past and present.

Barrow-in-Furness and the surrounding islands lie at the tip of the Furness Peninsula. The coast and islands are dotted with rich industrial and military heritage and wonderful wildlife. The sand dunes are perfect for rare natterjack toads, claimed to be Europe's noisiest amphibian, and the beaches, shingle, and saltmarshes are home to birds, seals and rare orchids.

Ulverston

Visit Ulverston, on the coast of the Furness peninsula where the River Leven meets Morecambe Bay.

Explore coastal woodlands and look out for the rare black darter dragonfly, or follow the river to magical mosses. Ulverston has a rich cultural heritage, surrounded by spiritual sites. The town is a great base to explore woodlands and wetlands, valleys and estuaries.

Grange-over-Sands

Enjoy Grange-over-Sands, where sculpted limestone pavements and wooded hills merge into the saltmarshes and mudflats of Morecambe Bay

This seaside town on the coast of the Cartmel peninsula is the perfect place for watching wading birds that flock here in

their thousands to feed on the shellfish and shrimps hidden in the estuarine sands.

Witherslack

Discover Witherslack, gateway to dramatic landscapes of limestone cliffs, peaceful peatbogs and wonderful woodlands.

Explore the mosaic of habitats in this area, and see something new at every turn. The ancient peatbogs here are home to red deer, the limestone pavements are a haven for butterflies, and springtime in the woods is truly spectacular.

Arnside

Explore Arnside, a picturesque coastal village on the edge of a limestone outcrop surrounded by stunning places to experience nature's wonders.

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an extraordinary place, famous for amazing wildlife and stunning scenery and superb walks. The limestone here is the special ingredient that provides the right conditions for many flowering plants that provide home to a host of different butterflies.

Silverdale

Enjoy Silverdale, surrounded by great places to see and experience nature's wonders

At the heart of Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty seek out the elusive otters, listen to the boom of the rare bittern and explore the fascinating limestone pavements.

Morecambe

Relax in Morecambe, a seafood haven for birds and visitors alike!

The massive panorama of vast shimmering sands with a backdrop of Lakeland fells is as mesmerising today as it was when tourists first visited in the 19th Century. The fantastic food, heritage, and nature of Morecambe are indebted to the vast intertidal sands teeming with sea creatures. Morecambe promenade is one of the best places around the bay to watch flocks of birds feeding at this

seafood bar.

Lancaster

Discover Lancaster, where incredible numbers of wading birds gather against a backdrop of rich maritime history.

The River Lune flows through this historic city and into Morecambe Bay. The marine life here has attracted both birds and fishermen throughout the ages. Explore the birds and nature around the city's historic trading ports - atmospheric Sunderland Point on the north bank and lively Glasson Dock on the south bank.

River Wyre

Explore the beaches and marshes along the River Wyre and soak up the rich soundscape of waders and pink footed geese.

The River Wyre and Rossall Point mark the southern boundary of Morecambe Bay. The marshes, sands and muds are feeding grounds for many birds, and particularly pink footed geese, as they winter here before making their long journey back to Iceland and Greenland to breed. They are a noisy bunch, they make a medley of high-pitched honking calls as they fly. Large skeins (flocks) are almost deafening!



Hampsfell hospice
© Steve Pipe



Rossall Point tower
© Jenny Wain



Getting here

We believe that a car free journey is a care free journey. We have a great coastal railway so why not:

- **Arrive by train. Call National Rail Enquiries on 08457484950.**

Getting Around

Morecambe Bay is the perfect place for exploration and discovery. It is also covered with a network of historic routes and journeys that are still made today. The area is perfect for exploring without a car, thanks to the quiet lanes, promenades and car free cycling routes, extensive footpaths for walking and breath-taking train journeys.

- **Take a compass and map (OS Explorer OL6 and OL7) and wear appropriate clothing.**
- **By bike, explore on national cycle routes 62 and 70, or long distance routes – Walney to Wear and the Way of the Roses.**
- **Search online for bike hire with Silverdale Cycles, Cycle 100, Lakeland Cycles and Sunshine Cycles.**

Staying Longer

There are great places to stay in towns, villages and the countryside around the bay, and great places to eat and relax as you explore.

Useful contacts: call or search online

- www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk
- www.golakes.co.uk
- www.barrowtourism.co.uk
- **Ulverston Tourist Information Centre 01229 588994**
- **Grange Tourist Information Centre 015395 34026**
- **Arnside & Silverdale AONB 01524 761034**
- **Morecambe Visitor Information Centre 01524 582808**
- **Lancaster Visitor Information Centre 01524 582394**
- **Visit Fleetwood Centre 01253 887693**
- **Visit Garstang 01995 602125**
- **Bay Tourism Association 01524 736926**
- **Traveline 0871 200 22 33**



Explore the nature of all around the bay with our Nature on your Doorstep guides and find out more about different nature rich places at: www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover

This leaflet is brought to you by Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership's Nature Improvement Area and Morecambe Bay Partnership's 700 Days to Transform the Bay scheme. It is funded by Defra, DCLG, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Coastal Communities Fund and RSPB Futurescapes EU Life Comms +.

The routes described are for guidance only. Please use an up to date map when exploring this area. It's a good idea to plan your route in more detail before you set off, and to check the weather forecast and tide tables. Wear appropriate clothing and don't forget to take food and water. The Partnerships above cannot be held responsible in the unlikely event of injury or accident whilst exploring this area. For more information on the exploring the nature of Morecambe Bay visit www.morecambebaynature.org.uk