

ROUTE DETAILS

LENGTH: Main route = 3 km, short route = 0.5km

TIME: Main route (2-3 hours), short route (30 minutes)

DIFFICULTY: Main route (difficult), short route (easy)

GRADIENT: Steep in parts

DOGS: Dogs allowed

Start and end location: Ilfracombe Aquarium (EX34 9EQ)

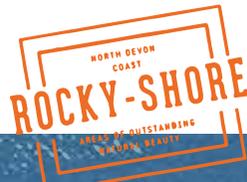
1. Leave Ilfracombe Aquarium and turn right onto the promenade with the harbour on your left hand side.

2. If the tide is out you can turn left onto the beach by going down a ramp onto the sand. Walk along the top of the beach, about 100m, until you reach some steps which will take you back onto the route. On the beach you may find items washed up from the sea such as seaweed, seashells and sometimes sea glass. If the tide is high simply follow the road round to the left and left again on Broad Street until you can see the harbour once more.

3. Once you're back on the road follow the pavement keeping the harbour on your left hand side. Around the harbour you might see fishing boats landing crab, lobster, ray and squid and see gulls swirling overhead.

4. When the road starts to gently slope uphill and turn the corner take the path on your left taking you down a short hill which will curve round to the left going round Larkstone beach.

5. Follow this path straight ahead around the coast until you reach the top of Rapparee beach, if you're feeling adventurous and the tide is low then you can go down the steps to the beach to investigate it and then leave the beach by going up the steps on the other side. If you follow this path up, it will join onto the main route. If the tide is high follow the path up to the right keeping the hedge on your left hand side.



ABOUT ILFRACOMBE AQUARIUM

Located in a delightful, sheltered, harbour-side position, Ilfracombe Aquarium and cafe, housed in the Old Lifeboat House, is an award-winning, all-weather attraction. Its local aquatic exhibits provide a unique insight and fascinating, zoned journey of discovery into the local aquatic life of North Devon. Its living exhibits are lovingly-cared-for, and are beautiful re-creations of natural habitats. The zoned journey starts at the source of an Exmoor stream, takes you down river to the estuary, includes a local rockpool, Ilfracombe Harbour, the coast and then out to Lundy and its Marine Conservation Zone. In the aquarium there are free quiz trails with sticker prizes and extensive interpretation. Talks and feeding demonstrations are provided throughout each day by friendly, experienced fish keeper guides who remain on-hand to assist.

ABOUT THE NORTH DEVON COAST AONB

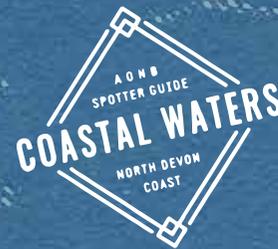
The North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a stunning coastal area which is nationally protected for the beauty of its landscape. It covers 171 km² of the coastal landscape including special places such as Combe Martin, Lee Bay, Woolacombe, Croyde, Saunton, Braunton Burrows, Westward Ho! and the Hartland Peninsula. Learn more on our website: www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk or on Facebook and Twitter @ExploreTheCoast. Coastal Creatures was a coastal education project by the North Devon Coast AONB funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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Credits:

Front cover image: Neville Stanikk

Illustrations: Jack Sewell Art



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ILFRACOMBE & HILLSBOROUGH WILDLIFE TRAIL

SEABIRDS & MARINE MAMMALS



COASTAL CREATURES SELF-GUIDED WALK

This wildlife trail is a self-guided circular walk starting at Ilfracombe Aquarium, taking in Ilfracombe's harbour, beaches and Hillsborough Nature Reserve, where you will encounter a range of incredible coastal species from the high viewpoints, beaches and rocky shores.

KEY:

- **YELLOW DOTS:**
Directions for main route, numbered 1-11, number 12 is a small extra route
 - **YELLOW LINE:**
High tide walk (clockwise)
 - **RED LINE:**
Low tide walk (off route options)
 - **GREEN LINE:**
Very short route (anti-clockwise)
 - **PURPLE LINE:**
Caution along this stretch of route
- | | |
|--|---|
|  Aquarium |  Public toilets |
|  Beach |  Rockpools |
|  Nature reserve |  Woodland |
|  Observation point | |



6. When you meet a crossways on the path go straight across if you've come from the beach or take the right hand path if you've followed the high tide path.
7. At the next intersection you reach, take the well-trodden path on the left which starts to gently climb up the hill further into Hillsborough Nature Reserve.
8. At the top of the hill there's an option to take a path to the left to a viewpoint over the Bristol Channel. Be careful as there are no railings up here and the cliff edge drops away quickly. From this vantage point it is possible to see seabirds such as gannets, cormorants and fulmars as well as the occasional harbour porpoise and grey seal! From here, re-join the path and continue on it as it starts to zigzag down the hillside.
9. Before you reach the next intersection there's another viewpoint to your left to look over the bay (this one is safer with railings). At the next intersection you reach turn left and continue round the corner keeping the sea to your left.
10. If the tide is low there's a path at the next intersection which leads you down to Hele beach. At the rockpools there, it is possible to see squat lobsters, sea anemones, fan worms and other incredible intertidal wildlife. If you chose not to take this detour simply follow the path round to the right. Keep on this lower path until you complete the circuit. Around here you can see coastal birds and trees. The main tree species on the coast here is the sycamore as it can withstand onshore winds and the occasional salt spray.
11. When you finish the loop return back to Ilfracombe Aquarium using the same route that led you to this point.
12. For a shorter walk from Ilfracombe Aquarium, follow the path behind the Lundy Island Office up Lantern Hill. This is a short, steep circular route but gives you a good vantage point over the Bristol Channel. From here it is possible to see harbour porpoise, grey seals and a range of seabirds.