

Rhossili coastal trail



This is an exhilarating walk in one of the most spectacular areas in Wales, owned and managed by the National Trust. The mix of dramatic cliffs, large beach, undulating upland and wild sea-scape ensure good views of exciting birdlife throughout the year.

Directions to the start of the trail

From J47 of the M4, head towards Gorseinon on the A483 and join the A4118 to South Gower via the A4126. Follow the A4118 through Upper Killay, Parkmill and Nicholaston. At Scurlage, join the B4247, which will take you to Rhossili. Park in the car park (small charge) next to the Worm's Head Hotel. You can also take the 118 Pullman service from Swansea bus station to Rhossili.

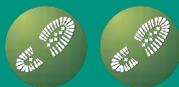
Look out for...



Curlew

12

Trail information



Distance: 6 miles
Time: 4 hours
Grid reference (start): SS 415 881
OS Explorer 164

A mix of coastal and heathland terrain, with some rocky areas that may be slippery when wet. There is one particularly steep part on Rhossili Down, when descending from the Beacon, and one or two other points of the walk which pass close to cliff edges.

Facilities

at beginning/end of trail



Photographs

Rhossili (The Photolibary
Wales)

Curlew by Chris Gomersall
Kestrel by Mark Hamblin
Yellowhammer by
Gerald Downey

Linnet by Mike Lane
(all rspb-images.com)

The route

For a short one-hour walk, finish at point 5 and, where the trail meets the road, head left back into Rhossili. You can also start at point 6, turning up the T-road and following points 6–10.

- 1** From the car park, turn left along the wide concrete path. At the National Trust visitor centre, keep your eye on the coast for soaring peregrines and listen for curlews and other wading birds below on Rhossili beach.
- 2** Follow the wide grass track across the peninsula to the coastguard's lookout. Here, there are stunning views of Worm's Head – look out for flocks of oystercatchers and the occasional rock pipit. Further out, there may be cormorants, shags and even diving gannets. As you continue left along the coastline, listen for stonechats singing from the tops of gorse bushes. You may also spot a hunting kestrel.
- 3** Still on the path, look for the red cheeks and gold wing bars of goldfinches amongst the teasels. Ignore an approaching stile and continue right to the next headland. Soon, you will see Fall Bay, where you can often spot choughs and wheatears.
- 4** At a fork in the path, keep left, listening for the ravens croaking overhead. At a ladder and wall, turn right, down the slope and then up to the left around the cliff – take care in this rocky area. As the path levels off, watch out for meadow pipits. When you go left, further inland, look for skylarks and bullfinches.
- 5** Follow the path as it veers left. Go through a gate and continue to the road in Middleton. Have a look at Nitten Field on the left, just after the gate – a wildlife cover crop

project attracts yellowhammers, linnets, choughs and tree sparrows. The RSPB, the land-owner and Gower Society manage and fund this project.

- 6** Turn left at the road. After two or three minutes, turn right at the T-road and walk past Jessamine Farm B&B on the left. After five minutes, you will pass Rhossili activity centre. Look out for colourful bullfinches.
- 7** Pass a National Trust sign to Rhossili Down and take an uphill path to your left. At the next 'junction', go left through the gorse, and take the next right, watching for stonechats. When the path widens into a bridleway, follow it until you see a trig point in front of you. This is the Beacon; look out for roaming choughs along this gorgeous stretch of upland.
- 8** Walk towards the caravan site you can see below. Keep a lookout for sparrowhawks, kestrels, peregrines and meadow pipits.
- 9** Take care as the path goes steeply downwards. Turn left at the wall below, keeping it on your right. Keep to this path, with the National Trust visitor centre ahead in the distance. Watch for kestrels and listen for the sharp chatter of wrens in the undergrowth and – even more closely – for the shrill 'zee-zee-zee' of our smallest bird – the goldcrest. See if you can spot its acrobatics on your right.
- 10** Cross a small bridge and follow the path through a gate to the road, where you will see St Mary's Church. Turn right, back to the car park and a deserved meal or drink at The Worm's Head Hotel (food is served 12 noon–9 pm).



Kestrel



Yellowhammer



Linnet

