

Bracing coastal walk – 5 miles

Marloes Peninsula, Pembrokeshire

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Explore this beautiful heathland peninsula, which has amazing views over the Pembrokeshire coast and is teeming with wildlife, such as seals, seabirds and porpoises.

Start: Marloes Sands car park **Map:** OS Landranger 157 **Grid ref:** SM789082

Getting here...

Train: Haverfordwest 12 miles, Milford Haven 9 miles, Pembroke Dock 13 miles

Foot: Marloes and the Deer Park are on the Pembrokeshire Coast Path

Bus: 315 Puffin Shuttle, Haverfordwest - Marloes, daily May – September. See www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk for timetable

Bike/car: B4327 from Haverfordwest, along numerous country roads

Facilities: WCs near car park (next to Youth Hostel), Martin's Haven and Marloes village. Refreshments in Marloes Village

Things to look out for...

Iron Age Forts

The earth ramparts you may come across on this walk protected the occupants of the fort from land attacks. The fort marked on the map overleaf has long since been lost to the sea and the Deer Park was also once defended by a large Iron Age Fort.

Seabirds and Chough

Skomer and Grassholm are major seabird colonies; see if you can spot Puffins, Guillemots, Gannets and other seabirds along this walk during the spring and summer. This area is also a very popular breeding ground for the distinctive Chough, which can be seen all year round.

Coastal Heathland Restoration

Heathland plants, such as heather and gorse, need nutrient-poor acidic soils to grow, however, modern farming practices have increased soil fertility by applying lime, manure and fertiliser, all of which are bad news for heathland. Trehill Farm is part of an important heathland restoration experiment, working to provide more favourable soil conditions for heathland by stripping the topsoil and speeding up the process of re-acidification by adding sulphur, a by-product of the Chevron Texaco oil refinery at Pembroke.

Geology

The geology of the peninsula presents strong contrasts; while the south side is made up of sedimentary sandstones, the north side, Deer Park and Skomer are igneous rocks, which are the remains of old volcanoes.



About 50 Atlantic grey seal pups are born each year on the beaches around the peninsula, making the cliffs above the beaches on the Deer Park excellent for cliff-top seal watching.

© P. Newman



Look out for Welsh Mountain ponies on the Deer Park. Their grazing is essential for keeping the important coastal heathland vegetation in good order.

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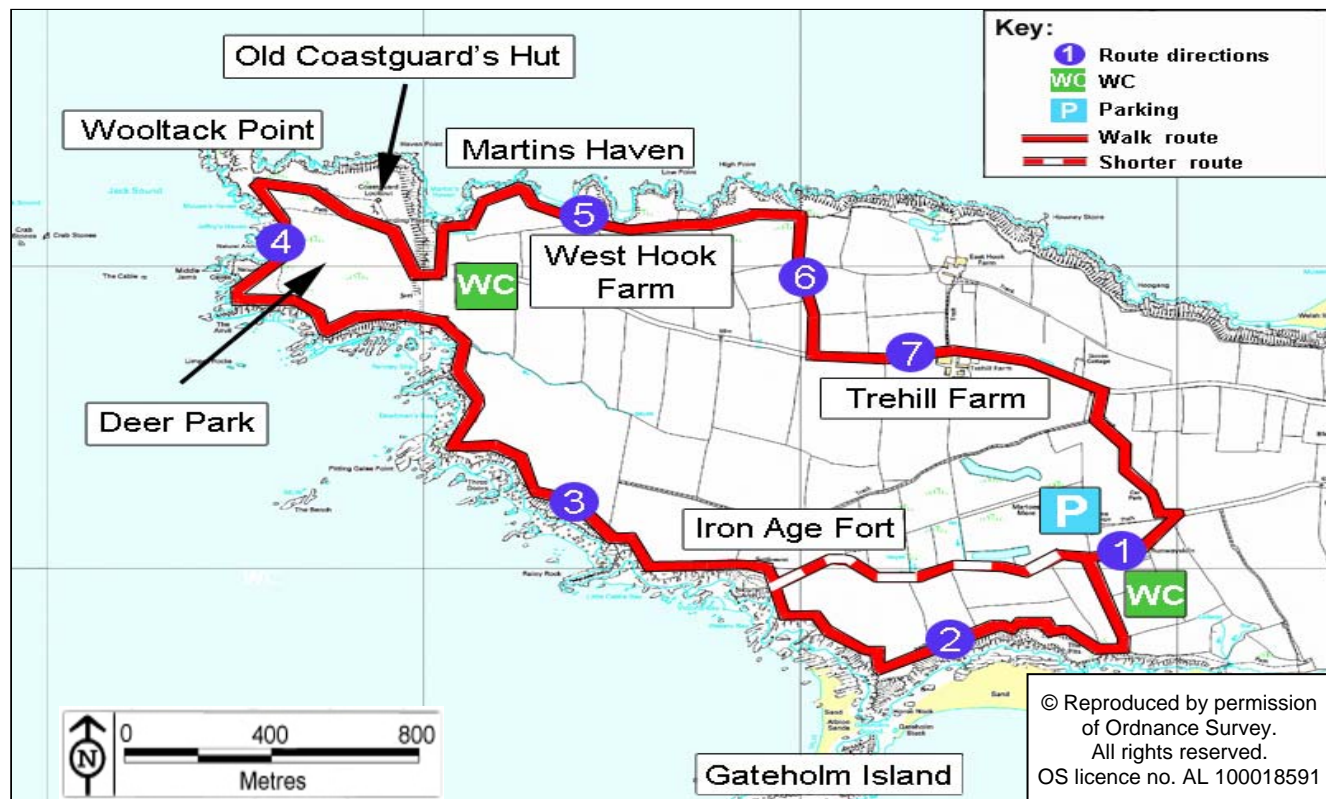


This Razorbill is just one example of the many seabirds you can spot on the peninsula; Guillemots, Puffins and Razorbills breed in huge colonies on Skomer, and Grassholm is one of the largest gannetries in the world. Wooltack Point is a good vantage point for watching seabirds fishing.

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Route and directions...

1. From the south end of Marloes Sands car park turn right by the emergency phone, following signs to YHA and toilets. A short distance past the toilets, take a path to the left through a self-closing gate signposted to the beach. At the next self-closing gate the islands of Skokholm and Gateholm come into view.
2. On reaching the coast path you will see Marloes Sands to your left. Turn right, however, and continue towards Gateholm Island. As you come level with Gateholm, Skokholm is ahead of you with Skomer coming into view on the right. **Just before the earth ramparts of the Iron Age coastal fort, a finger post points back towards Marloes Mere and the Youth Hostel. This makes an alternative short walk of 2.9 km.**
3. Continue along the coast path and through the Iron Age fort; enjoy the dramatic sedimentary rock formations along the coast. Skomer Island and Midland Isle gradually come into view. Grassholm, white with gannets in summer, can be seen on the horizon from the Iron Age Fort.
4. At a footbridge, shortly before a white cottage, take the left fork towards more Iron Age ramparts and follow the path round the coastline of the Deer Park. The treacherous waters of Jack Sound lie between the Deer Park and Midland Isle, while Wooltack Point offers spectacular views across St Bride's Bay. Seal pups can be spotted on the small beaches at the west end of the Deer Park in late summer and Jack Sound is a popular haunt for porpoises. There are wonderful panoramic views from the former Coastguard Hut, which is now used by the National Coastwatch Institute. Take time to explore the Deer Park and when you're ready, leave by the path down through the ramparts and through the gate.



5. Turn left towards Martins Haven and the Skomer embarkation point. Just before the beach follow the coast path right and up the steps. The path continues east, with St Bride's Bay to the left and West Hook Farm to the right. Enjoy the magnificent views across St Brides Bay towards Newgale, the Solva Coast, St David's Peninsula and Ramsey Island.
6. After just over a mile, leave the coast path, turning right through a self-closing gate and a 'West Hook Farm' National Trust omega sign then cross three fields to the road.
7. Turn left and walk along road past Trehill Farm. 400 metres past the farm, turn right by two semi-detached cottages and down the track leading back to the car park. (100 metres past the turning, a track to the right leads to another hide overlooking Marloes Mere).

Contact us

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Walk distance, terrain and accessibility... 5 miles/8 km. Moderate to rugged paths, some gradients and steps. Dogs welcome, please clear up after your dog and keep on leads in the presence of livestock. Accessible route: Martins Haven car park to level section of south-facing cliff path.

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