

Wildlife Walk – 6 miles

Cubert, Cornwall

THE NATIONAL TRUST

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The coastline just south of Newquay is incredibly varied with fantastic displays of arable flora in summer. At West Pentire see whole fields scarlet with poppies and other rare meadow plants. There is also lots of sandy grassland, rich in wildflowers like cowslip and pyramidal orchid. The dunes behind Holywell Bay are the home for hundreds of different insects and great for bug hunting. This is truly a walk for all seasons... visit in autumn for a privileged view of grey seal pups and winter to find migrant birds in the fields.

Getting there

Bike: a National Cycle Network route goes around Newquay. See www.sustrans.org.uk

Bus: on the Newquay-Cubert route and Newquay-Crantoek-Cubert route (alight 1km away)

Foot: South West Coastal path

Rail: Newquay  is 5½ miles away

Road: just south of Newquay off the A3075; follow minor road through Crantoek to West Pentire and park in the car park at the end of the road (not NT)

Map & grid ref: OS Landranger 200: SW775605

Facilities and contact

Car park, pub at West Pentire, nearest shops in Crantoek and Cubert, nearest WC in Crantoek

Points of interest

- **Plants:** some of the fields in West Pentire have stunning arable flora which are best seen in June and July when the poppies and corn marigolds are in flower. Also see Venus' looking-glass, shepherd's needle, small-flowered catchfly and weasel's snout, which are rare due to modern farming methods. Wander into the fields if you wish, but be careful not to crush the crops or wild flowers. Also look for pyramidal orchid and carline thistle in the lime-rich grasslands.
- **Insects:** at Holywell Dunes there are a multitude, including silver-studded blue and dark-green fritillary butterflies; great green bush cricket and stripe-winged grasshopper. The summer months are the best time to see them.
- **Birds:** seed-eating birds such as corn bunting, grey partridge and winter visitors such as snow and lapland buntings are found in the West Pentire fields. A thin crop of barley is sown in some of the fields so the birds have a seed source in the winter. This is particularly important for birds such as the grey partridge that have declined greatly in Britain. Fulmar nest on nearby cliffs and buzzards are seen in the valley behind Porth Joke. There is a good chance of seeing whimbrel, skylark and wheatear on the Kelseys.
- **Animals:** see grey seals hauled out on the rocks at low tide and stoats chasing rabbits down the slopes towards Porth Joke. Seals are inquisitive and will come close to visitors who remain still. Basking sharks are seen in Holywell Bay along with porpoises and dolphins.

NT places nearby

Trerice, Crantoek Beach and Rushy Green, Chapel Porth & St Agnes



This grey seal is one of many that can be seen in the area. Pups are around in late autumn and are easily spotted because they are born with a white fur coat

NTPL/Joe Cornish



Wildflowers, including poppies and corn marigolds, can be enjoyed at Cubert, alongside other arable plants like weasel's snout

NTPL/Joe Cornish



The silver studded blue butterfly is nationally scarce and has a national action plan to reverse its decline. Look out for this and other butterflies like the dark green fritillary

NT/Matthew Oates

'This is a great place to visit at any time of year, but the early summer displays of wildflowers at West Pentire can be spectacular'

Janet Lister, NT Nature Conservation Adviser, Devon & Cornwall

Distance, terrain and accessibility

This walk is approximately six miles (9½ km) but the route just around the West Pentire headland is one mile (1½ km). This is an easy to moderate walk with some short steep slopes and steps on the coast path. Beware of cliff edges. Stout footwear is advised.

Route and directions

1. Start at the car park in West Pentire and walk north on a path towards the coast, with wildflower fields on your left in summer.
2. Take the left at the junction of two paths, then the next right along the edge of a field. At the end of this field take the left-hand path, then the right one, so that you are exactly on the edge of the coast, following it around to the left, away from West Pentire.
3. Look out for fulmar – birds that look superficially like gulls, but are in fact petrels. They nest around this area of the coast, laying a single white egg on bare rock or lined shallow depressions. Keep following the coastal path also looking out for buzzards inland. The shortcut back to the car park is a left-hand path at the point of Porth Joke (sands), which goes back across the fields.
4. Have a look at the Iron Age fort on your right then continue following the coast, which loops around the sand dunes of Holywell Beach.
5. The path then heads directly inland off the beach. Follow it straight across the junction, then downhill to another four-way junction, taking the left-hand path.
6. Carry straight on turning left at the track, then further on keeping right past the disused quarry. Follow the fork forward then take the next small path on the left. Follow the track uphill past another disused quarry on the right and along the fields back to the car park.



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