

Blackhall Rocks Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

History

The Durham coast was devastated by the coal industry in the 20th century but has been restored as a result of work carried out through the Turning the Tide Project. For historical information contact the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership on 0191 383 3741 or go to www.durhamheritagecoast.org

What is special?

The coastal views are stunning and every day is varied; wind, sunshine and sea fret alter the mood and can make it feel like a completely different place.

It's rare and it's here

The underlying geology at Blackhall Rocks is Magnesian Limestone. The thin soil on top is of poor quality with a high lime content. A rich and unique group of wildflowers and grasses, known as Magnesian Limestone grassland, grows on this type of soil. Plants found on the coastal grassland include cowslip, thrift and common rock-rose. Most of this grassland has been destroyed in Britain over the past century and two thirds of the remainder can be found in the north east. These meadows are best seen in June and July when they are in full bloom.

[more info...](#)

Contact the Countryside Service

telephone: 0191 372 9100

email: countryside@durham.gov.uk

www.durham.gov.uk/countryside



Area: 193 acres (78 hectares)

Total length of Easy Access route: 0.3 mile (500 metres)

Grid Reference: NZ 471 387

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 308

Directions: Approx 14 miles east of Durham City centre. From A19, take B1281 signed to Blackhall and Castle Eden. After the War Memorial (approx 1/2 mile) the road bears a sharp right. After this bend turn left. Continue until you come to the T-junction at Blackhall Colliery. Turn right onto the A1086 and then take the next main left (Station Road). Continue under the railway bridge and follow the signs into the picnic area. Nearest postcode for GPS purposes TS27 4AT



Parking: Two disabled parking bays at Blackhall Rocks car park. Limited parking at Dead Man's Point, no disabled bays.

Public transport: Buses from Hartlepool (Go North East x5, 231, Arriva 230, 242) and Peterlee (Go North East x5, 231, Arriva 242, 246)

Dogs: Allowed under control on a lead during bird nesting season (March to August). Please clean up after your dog

Designation: Local Nature Reserve, picnic area, within Durham Heritage Coast, UK Woodland Assurance Scheme certified. Part Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation

Suitable for: Walkers, wheelchair users

Habitats: Neutral Grassland, coastal Magnesian Limestone grassland, scrub, ponds

Whilst every effort has been made by Durham County Council to ensure accuracy of information, the Council cannot accept any liability resulting from omissions or inaccuracies.

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A bird-watchers paradise

These vast areas of wildflower rich meadows and grasslands are ideal for bird-watching. The coast has one of the highest densities of breeding skylarks in County Durham (populations have reduced nationally by 70%). Merlins often appear in the winter, attracted from the uplands to hunt small song birds. Other birds include short-eared owl, stonechat, meadow pipit, reed bunting, kestrel and numerous sea birds.

There are brown hares, voles, foxes, stoats, weasels and one of the largest populations of toads in County Durham. We close the road to Dead Man's Point for a few days in March each year to allow the toads a safe passage across back to their breeding ponds. The cliff tops contain the wildflowers greater knapweed, bloody cranesbill and birds-eye primrose.

Help us to protect this rare habitat

- Magnesian Limestone grassland is sensitive and does not respond well to being trampled on, please stick to existing paths
- Clean up after your dog - dog poo which is left to rot on the ground increases the nutrient levels in the soils which means wildflowers cannot survive
- Keep your dog on a lead during the bird nesting season (March to August)

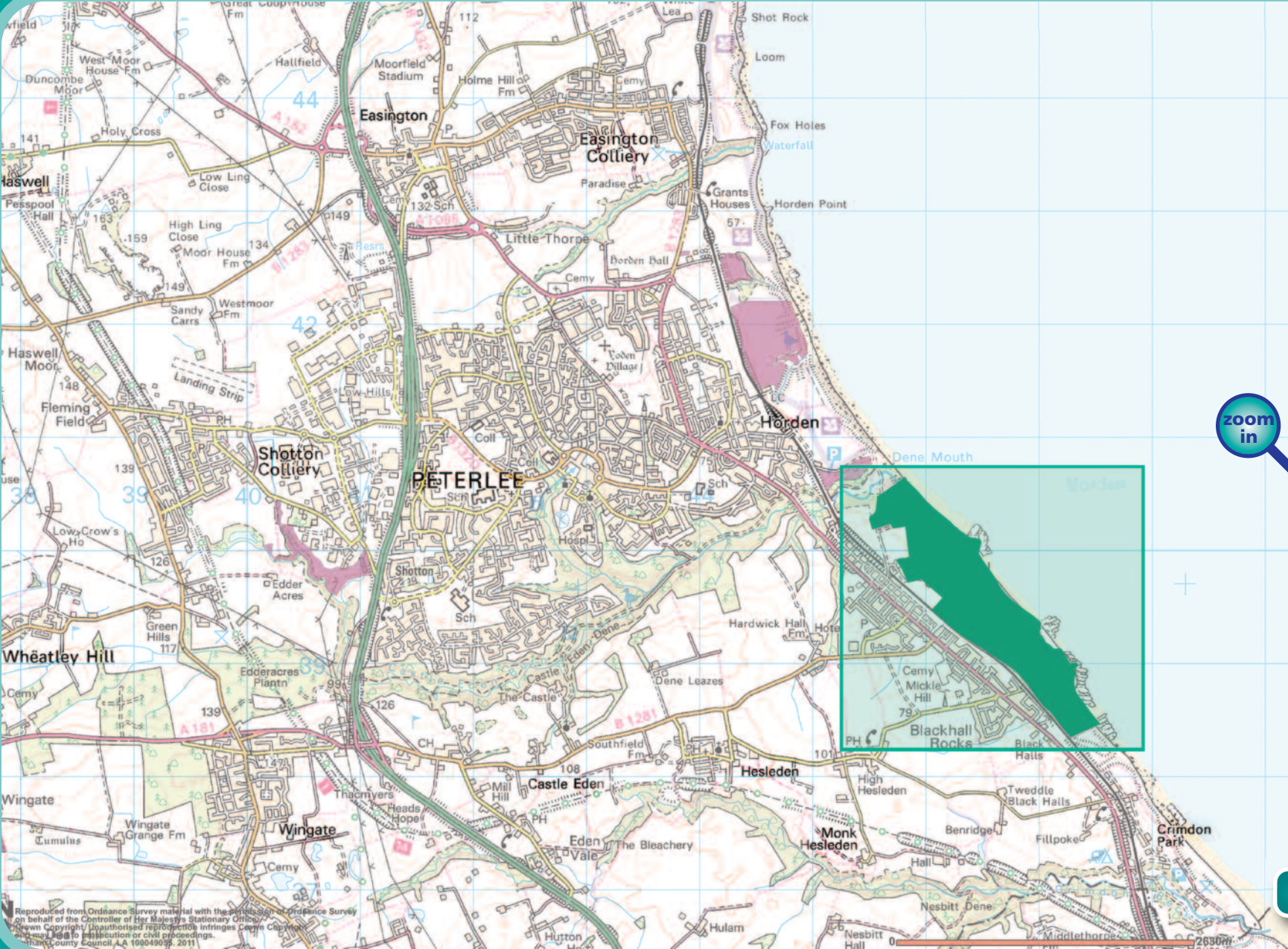
Accessibility statement

Blackhall Rocks has a circular Easy Access route which is gently undulating with one short steep section. This route has a 2m wide, sealed surface and has seats at regular intervals. Paths and tracks throughout the rest of the site can be narrow and are made of a mixture of hardened surface with some large stones, pot holes and bare earth. There are various slopes but only those which are particularly steep are marked. There are numerous steps down to the beach which are steep and uneven. A section of the coastal footpath runs through this site, this is an 11 mile linear route between Seaham and Crimdon. Take care near cliff edges.



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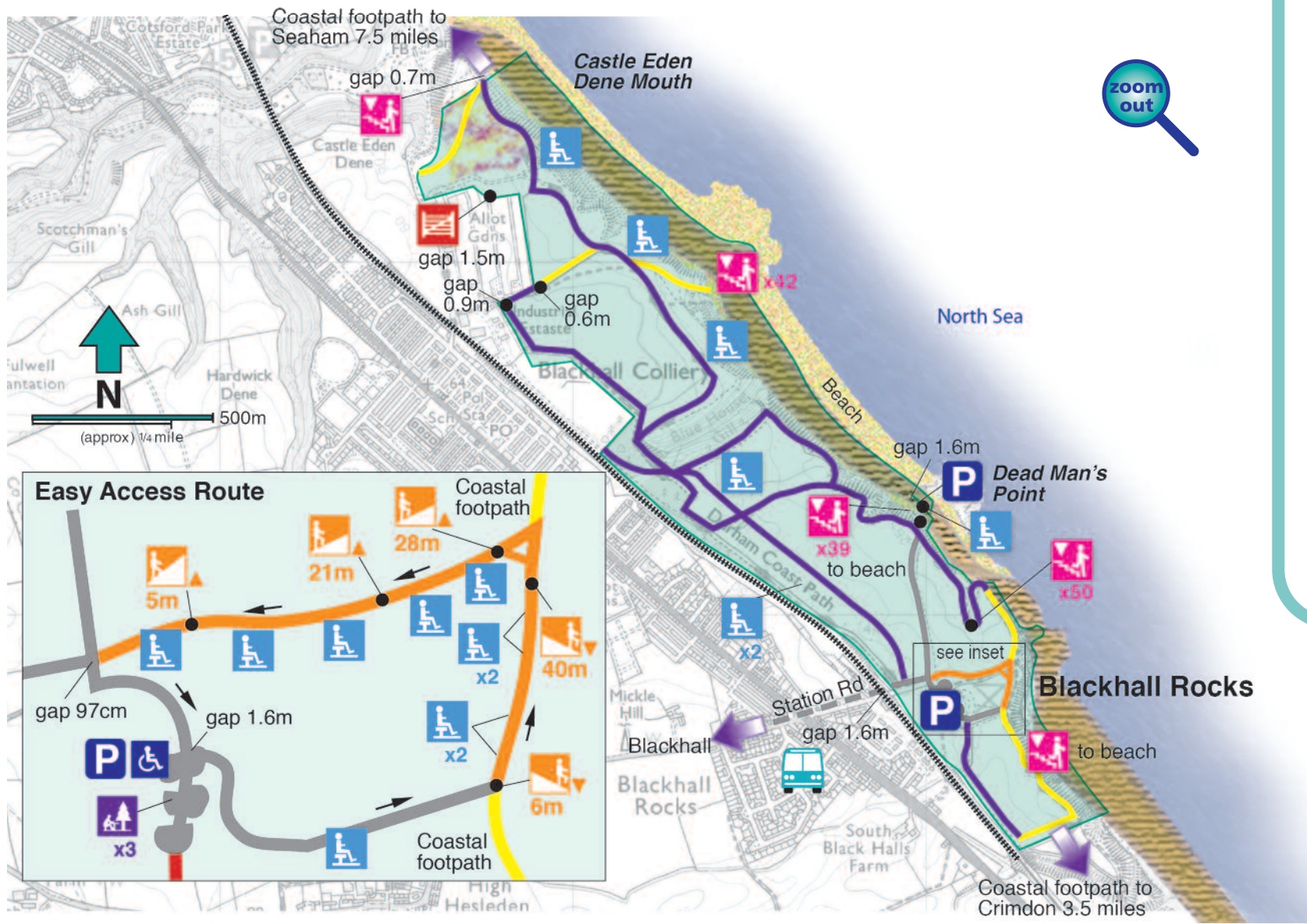
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KEY

-  Picnic Area
-  Seat
-  Steps Up
-  Steps Down
-  Gate
-  Steep Slope Up 1:10-1:10
-  Medium Slope Up 1:20-1:10
-  Medium Slope Down 1:10-1:10
-  Parking
-  Disabled Parking
-  Bus Stop
-  Road/Tarmac
-  Hard Unsealed Surface
-  Easy Access Route
-  Bare Earth
-  Railway



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