



The wildlife trail: Naturally Plymouth

Discover the natural world
on our wildlife trail around
Plymouth city centre

Positively
Plymouth

Introduction

Did you know over a third of Plymouth is covered with green spaces; including parks, nature reserves and woodlands?

With a stunning marine environment lapping on our shore, a national park to the north and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty on our doorstep, that's a lot of nature!

Follow our city centre wildlife trail overleaf for a taste of nature nearby. Then why not explore some of our other fantastic natural spaces up to half an hour's travel from the centre.

Local Nature Reserves

Did you know that Plymouth has 8 public nature reserves that you can visit any time? There's something different to experience every season, frog spawn in the spring, butterflies in the summer, wild mushrooms in the autumn and a range of over-wintering birds.

Maps, nature facts and more on Plymouth's nature conservation pages at www.plymouth.gov.uk/natureconservation

The wildlife trail: Naturally Plymouth

You may think that Plymouth City Centre is all about shopping, but we know that a wild world of flora and fauna exists around almost every corner.

Our two mile wildlife trail takes you from the heart of the city around to the waterfront and back. Follow the whole trail or just visit one point. Remember: a good wildlife explorer needs enthusiasm, sharp eyes and patience!

The trail is mainly flat with one gentle hill up onto the Hoe. Wheelchair and buggy friendly option available.

Test your new knowledge with our nature quiz, answers on the last page.

Wildlife Trail Key:

Main route, approx 2 miles

Alternate (wheelchair / pushchair) route from Hoe Road, approx 2 miles return

Toilets

Buildings

Bridge

Shingle

Beach Access

1. The Sundial Fountain
Pigeon Picnic

4. St Andrew's Cross Roundabout
'Tree-mendous!'

3. Royal Parade
Lines of Lime

2. Guildhall Tower
Falcon's family

5. Sutton Harbour
Seagull Stroll

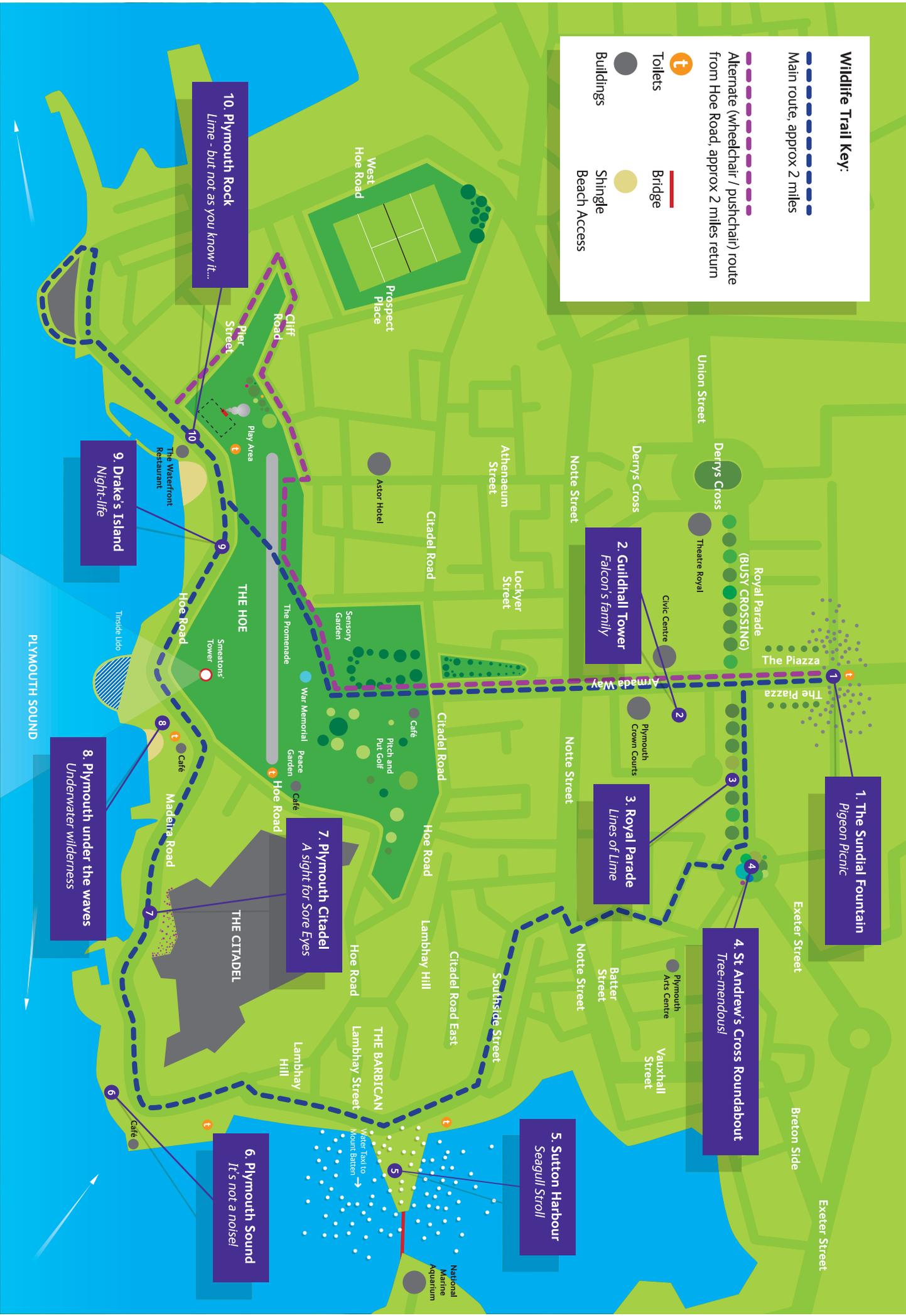
7. Plymouth Citadel
A sight for Sore Eyes

6. Plymouth Sound
It's not a noise!

8. Plymouth under the waves
Underwater wilderness

9. Drake's Island
Night-life

10. Plymouth Rock
Lime - but not as you know it...





1. The Sundial Fountain

Pigeon Picnic

Pigeons have made their homes in cities across the world. Hundreds of them roost in buildings around the city and feed from scraps left by passers by.

1. Do you know the name of the bird that pigeons are descended from? Clue: they still nest on cliffs in northern Scotland.

2. Guildhall Tower

Falcon's family

Stop in the piazza and look across to the Guildhall tower with its copper green peaked roof. If you're patient, you may spot a peregrine falcon known to perch here. The fastest animal on earth, it reaches speeds of up to 200 mph when diving for prey.

To see a falcon up close why not visit the National Trust hide at Plymbridge Woods. For more information go to www.plym-peregrines.co.uk



2. Guess what the peregrine's favourite meal is?



3. Royal Parade

Lines of Lime

Walk up Royal Parade and enjoy the shade of the lime trees. But don't look for fruit as these trees are not related to the citrus fruit at all! Their Latin name is *Tilia* and their heart shaped leaves can be used for tea, the bark for cord and its wood is popular for making acoustic guitars.



3. We have three plants named after the city: Plymouth Pear, Plymouth Bladder Campion and Plymouth Thistle.
Guess which one this is? (photo inset)

4. St Andrew's Cross Roundabout

Tree-mendous

Look to your left when you reach the top of Royal Parade. How many different types of tree can you spot on the roundabout? Can you spot the Dawyck Beech? It's the only one native to the British Isles.

Our mild climate means we can grow sub-tropical plants here and once you start to look, you'll see palm trees dotted throughout the city centre. The Torbay Palm was brought over to Devon in 1820 by plant collectors from New Zealand - where it is known as the 'Majestic Cabbage Tree'



4. Some types of palm produce berries that we eat. Do you know what they are called? They're very good for your digestion!



5. Sutton Harbour

Seagull Stroll

You may think there are too many seagulls trying to eat your chips but herring gulls are now a red listed species, which gives them priority protection, as their population has declined by 50 per cent in the last 25 years. This decline is due to land management changes in rural coastal areas. Also look out for our resident grey seal that is often on the other side of the swing bridge which links to the National Marine Aquarium.

5. What's an easy way to spot different species of Gulls?

6. Plymouth Sound

It's not a noise!

One definition of 'sound' is a 'long, relatively wide body of water, larger than a strait or a channel, connecting larger bodies of water'.

Stop and stare out to sea. Look out for shags flying low over the water and oyster catchers screeching their 'pik-piki' call on the shoreline as they pull limpets from the rocks. The rocky shores are also rich in wildlife such as crabs, anemones and pipefish. The mudflats further up the estuaries are rich feeding grounds for migratory birds such as avocet and spoonbill.



6. From the Hoe, you can see three water entrances into the Plymouth Sound. Can you name them?



7. Plymouth Citadel

A sight for sore eyes

Between May and August enjoy our wildflower meadow beneath the grey walls of Plymouth Citadel. See if you can spot Wild Clary (photo inset). In medieval times it was known as 'clear eye'. If you soak its leaves in water, a thick gluey substance appears which was once used to cure sore eyes. Other flowers you might see include ox-eye daisy, bird's-foot trefoil, lady's bedstraw and wild carrot. Look out for butterflies such as common blue and small copper.

7. In the past the dried lady's bedstraw was used to stuff mattresses. Can you guess why?

8. Plymouth - under the waves

Underwater wilderness

The Sound and its estuaries are recognised as being of European importance for wildlife. Out in the water there are soft coral ecosystems and eelgrass beds which provide a home for weird and wonderful creatures such as seahorses, pink sea fan, dead man's fingers, sea slugs and sea cucumbers.

You might be lucky and spot a basking shark in summer, look out for their large dorsal fin. They are the second largest shark in the world and protected by law. Anyone capturing or disturbing them could even face up to six months in jail!



8. Do you know what basking sharks feed on? (*It's not humans!*)



9. Drake's Island

Night-life

At the top of the hill, look out to Drake's Island in the Sound. It's home to a colony of lesser horseshoe bats, one of the rarest bats in the UK. They hibernate in the fort because it's similar to their natural roosts in caves. Learn more about bats at Mt Edgcumbe where there is a bat colony. View them on the 'batcam' or attend an evening event with rangers. (Contact details overleaf).

9. Do you know how bats navigate and catch prey in the dark?

10. Plymouth Rock

Lime - but not as you know it...

Take a moment to enjoy West Hoe Park with its miniature railway and children's play area. This park was once a limestone quarry. In fact, the Hoe sits on a band of limestone rock measuring 30 metres high and 1.2 km long from the east in Cremyll, to the west in Plymstock.

10. In which country can you find the other Plymouth Rock? A clue: The pilgrims arrived there after leaving Plymouth's Mayflower Steps in 1620...



Answers: 1. Rock Dove. 2. Pigeon. 3. Plymouth Pear. 4. Dates. 5. By the colour of their legs! Lesser black-backed gulls=yellow legs, herring gulls=pink legs, black-headed gulls=red legs. 6. The English Channel to the south beyond the breakwater and the two freshwater inlets, the River Tamar to the west and the River Plym to the east. 7. The sweet scent of the plant acts as a flea killer! 8. They filter feed on microscopic animals called zooplankton. 9. Bats send ultrasound waves which are beyond the hearing range of most humans and 'listen' for the return signal when it bounces off objects. This is called 'echolocation'. 10. USA



Other places to explore

Naturally Plymouth has so much to offer and all within just half an hour from the City Centre (see map above). To discover more, read on...

Dartmoor National Park

This National Park is the same size as London, but with a lot more sheep than people! It's the largest and wildest area of open country in Southern England and has some of the best archaeological sites in Western Europe. Most of it is 'common land', with over 450 miles of routes where people are allowed to walk, cycle and ride horses.

To find out about events and activities, transport, places to stay and to download free audio guided walks go to www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk or call the High Moorland Visitor Centre on **01822 890414**.



Devil's Point Park

Just a half hour walk along the South West Coast Path from the Hoe.

Relax on the beach or a bench and enjoy great views of Cornwall and the ships coming in and out of Devonport Dockyard. It's a popular spot for experienced divers as just 50 metres beyond the tidal pool, an underwater cliff drops by 40 metres. Divers often go there to see the vast array of marine life, including the snake-like conger eel that hides in holes and crevices of the cliff face. You can get a glimpse of this underwater wonderland by snorkelling in water off Firestone Bay - but don't stray into the navigational channel.

Antony House

The National Trust-owned 18th-century mansion and gardens near Torpoint is only a half hour's bus journey from Plymouth.

Follow in the footsteps of the Mad Hatter and Alice as you explore the magical Antony garden, used as the setting for Disney's Alice in Wonderland. Discover the storytelling throne, follow the tree trail and picnic in the gardens. Regular events, tea-room and parking available (admission charge). For more information go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/antony Telephone **01752 812191**.



Cawsand Bay

A 30 minute ferry trip from the Barbican Landing Stage will take you to the Cornish twin villages of Cawsand and Kingsand, where you can swim, snorkel, sunbathe on the beach and explore the South West Coast Path. For information on how to get there visit www.cawsandferry.co.uk

Mount Edgcumbe Country Park

A great day out for the family, it's just a 10 minute foot-ferry ride on the Cremyll Ferry from Stonehouse. Enjoy a picnic, play games in the grounds and explore trails and gardens and coastline all for free! You can also visit the historic house and Earls Garden (admission charge applies) which was built for the Edgcumbe family in the 16th Century. For more information on events and activities and to download walking leaflets visit www.plymouth.gov.uk/mountedgcumbe Telephone **01752 822236** or email mt.edgcumbe@plymouth.gov.uk



The Tamar Valley

Surrounding the rivers Tamar, Tavy and Lynher, this is a world heritage site, famous for its mining landscape. You can go walking, treesurfing, canoeing or mountain biking. Or for something more relaxing, take a boat trip to Cotehele Quay, enjoy a cream tea and visit the National Trust's Cotehele House and gardens. For more information go to www.tamarvalley.org.uk

Batten Bay

A pretty, shingly beach which gives you a very different view of Plymouth. Go crabbing in the rockpools with a net and bucket. You could catch the velvet swimming crab with its red eyes and fierce fighting tactics, but remember to return creatures back to where you found them. Take a water taxi from the jetty near the Barbican's Mayflower Steps to Mount Batten.

For ferry details visit www.mountbattenferry.com



Wembury

From Batten Bay take the South West Coast Path east to Wembury. It's a five mile walk, passing forts and castles (or a half hour bus journey) to the beach at Wembury, a voluntary marine conservation area and a great spot for rock-pooling. There is also a seasonal Marine Centre, café and toilets. For more information go to www.southwestcoastpath.com, www.nationaltrust.org.uk and www.wemburymarinecentre.org

Getting around... the natural way!

Why not plan a car-free visit to one of our natural spaces?

By land:

To plan your journeys around Plymouth on public transport go to www.plymgo.com

The Transmoor Link bus service will take you to Dartmoor. Regular service from Plymouth to Exeter via Princetown and Moretonhampstead. To plan your journey go to www.journeydevon.info

Regular trains go from a number of Plymouth stations to the Tamar Valley.

For more information visit www.carfreedaysout.com

By sea:

There are a range of water taxis and cruises from the Barbican, Cremyll, and Mount Edgcumbe.

Visit www.tamarcruising.com and www.cawsandferry.co.uk for times and prices.

Hop on the ferry at the Barbican to get to Mountbatten and Batten Bay.

Go to www.mountbattenferry.com for times and prices

Tell us what you think of this Wildlife Trail leaflet.

Email comments to: steppingstones@plymouth.gov.uk

**A large format version of this leaflet is available on request.
Please contact Stepping Stones to Nature on 01752 307849
or email steppingstones@plymouth.gov.uk**

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