

Noup Head Loop

A circular walk of 6.4km (4m) following part of the West Westray Walk



Stunning cliff scenery, maritime heath, sea birds and a classic lighthouse.

The spectacular coastal scenery begins as soon as you descend to the cliffs from Backarass. Look for a small natural arch and see how the layered flagstone cliffs tilt away and then rise again in a syncline on the far side of the small bay. Old carvings on the cliff face show local names such as 'A Flett' and 'Gavin Mowat Rendall'.



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Sea pinks adorn the cliffs, with the tiny pink flowers of sea spurrey scattered amongst them. Before ascending the slopes of North Hill, where the path



Sea Pinks

crosses the burn called the Grip of Monivey, look for bog pimpnel, grass of Parnassus and devil's-bit scabious.



Grass of Parnassus

Out to sea, look for dolphins, porpoises and whales which pass this way especially in early autumn. Loch of the Stack is a shallow loch

used by many seabirds, including kittiwakes, to wash their plumage in the fresh water.

The cliffs get higher as you skirt North Hill, with a survey pillar marking the highest point at 76m (240ft). Far below is 'Gentlemen's Cave', one of two places on the island where the lairds of Westray, who supported the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, successfully hid from the forces of law. Noup Head Lighthouse was completed in 1898 by David A Stevenson, the last of the 'Lighthouse Stevensons' and first cousin of Robert Louis.