

Coastal walk... 6 miles


Craster to Low Newton by the Sea

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

For a bracing and beautiful coastal walk, Northumberland is without compare. This one sets foot from the fishing village of Craster, passing the mighty ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle and the long sweep of Embleton Sands before reaching Low Newton by the Sea. Spring is a wonderful time to visit when dune flowers bloom and seabirds are breeding.

Start point: Craster - Map & grid ref: OS Landranger 75, NU 258201

How to get there and facilities:

Craster is about 40 miles N of Newcastle, off the A1 above Alnwick. Alnmouth  is 7 miles away. See www.transportdirect.co.uk for bus service info. WCs, refreshments and car parking at Craster and Low Newton. Wildlife hides at Newton Pool. Contact us on 01661 576117.

Points of interest:

- **Craster**
This used to be a busy fishing village, but now only a few boats moor in the harbour. No visit is complete without trying Craster's famous smoked herring. L. Robson & Sons have been smoking fish here for nearly 100 years.
- **Low Newton by the Sea**
Like Craster, Low Newton has a strong fishing heritage. The little square of cottages was built in the 19th century for local fishermen. Look north from the village to see a former Coastguard Station on top of the hill, it is now a National Trust holiday cottage.
- **Birdlife**
The Northumberland coast is excellent for bird watching all year round. This walk takes in a range of habitats so you get to see a real variety of species. Waders like oystercatcher, dunlin, ringed plover, turnstone and redshank can be found on the shoreline in large numbers. You might spot linnet or yellowhammer in the scrub and grassland behind the dunes and castle. Geese, swan and ducks, like pochard, teal and goldeneye, visit Newton Pool – you can get great views of them at the wildlife hides which overlook the water.
- **Geology**
The outcrop on which Dunstanburgh Castle sits is called the Great Whin Sill. It is a stripe of hard volcanic rock that passes from the Pennines north to the Northumberland coast. It emerges above the surface here, at the Farne Islands and at Bamburgh Castle.
- **Rock Pools**
Search for marine creatures such as sea anemones, limpets, crabs and starfish. There are also lots of seaweeds like pink-coloured coralline, and, bladder, saw and knotted wracks.



Spot eider ducks (drake pictured here) bobbing around in the sea. They're known locally as Cuddy's Duck after Saint Cuthbert. He is said to have cared for them on the nearby Farne Islands where he lived as a hermit in the 7th century.

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Just a mile north of Craster, the 14th century ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle stands on a rocky headland, boldly looking out over the North Sea. The castle fell into disrepair after the Wars of the Roses.

© Joe Cornish / NTPL



Marram and lyme grass grow on the sand dunes providing a more stable environment for other plants to colonise. Look out for colourful wildflowers like orchids from late springtime, and burnet rose and bloody cranesbill (shown here) in summer.

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National Trust places to visit nearby

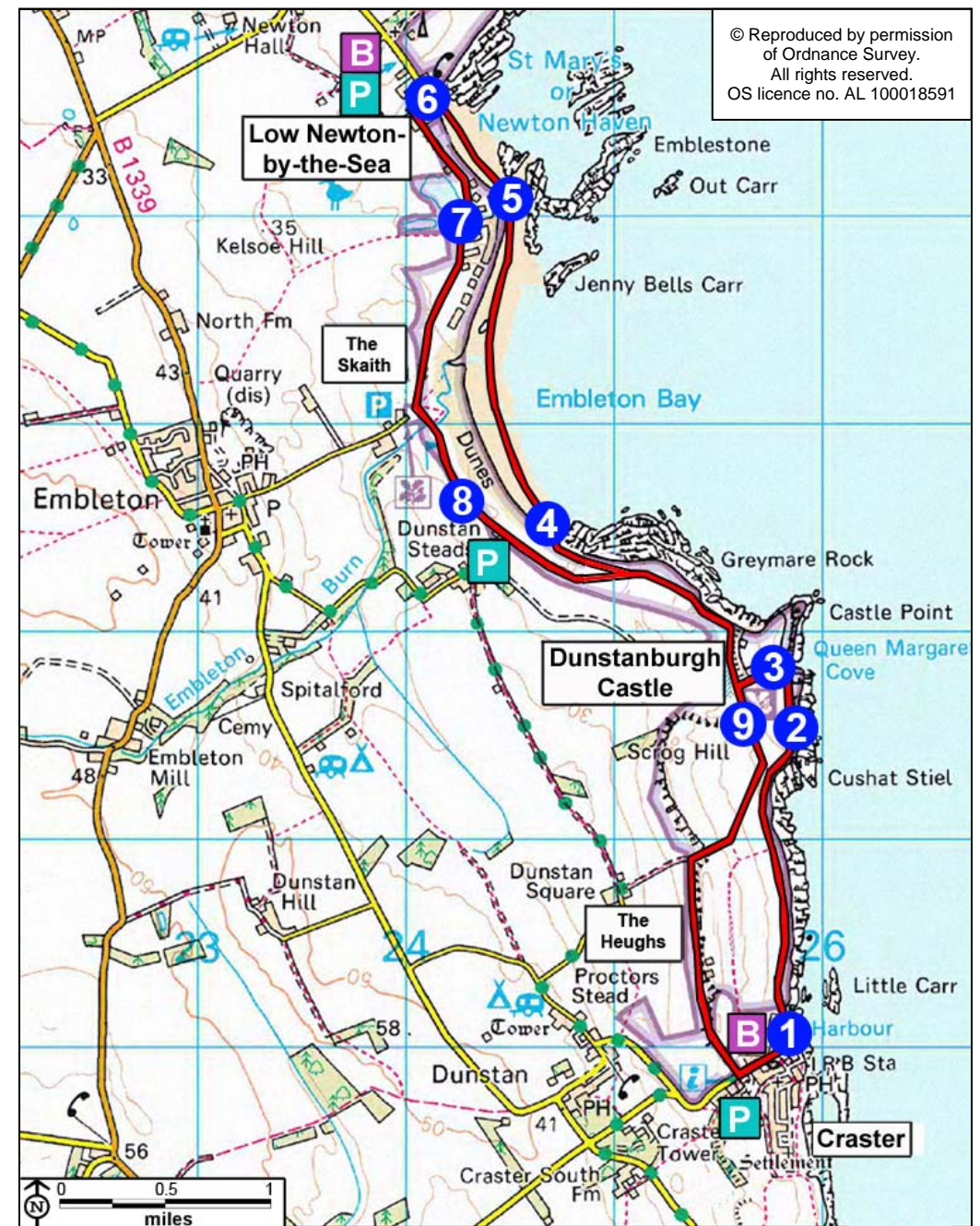
Beadnell Bay, Farne Islands, Lindisfarne Castle, Craggside

Distance, terrain and accessibility

This 6 mile (10km) circular walk is mostly on flat, firmly surfaced paths of grass or natural gravel. Some of the route passes through softer dunes and there is a short climb down on to the sands of Embleton beach. The path between points 6 and 7 is an all-ability trail to an accessible wildlife hide at Newton Pool.

Route and directions

1. Walk towards Dunstanburgh Castle passing Craster harbour. The path takes you through farmland with the rocky shoreline to your right. It's worth looking in the sheltered rock pools for eider duck.
2. National Trust members can visit the castle for free. In summer, roosting swallows swirl overhead and amongst the ruined chambers and staircases.
3. After edging around the base of the castle, note the peculiar cliff formation to your right. The 'Greymare Rock' was formed by volcanic pressure that folded the limestone. From April to August it is a breeding spot for kittiwake and fulmar.
4. Pass a golf course on your left and descend onto the beach. The concrete bunkers on the sand were built during WW2. Stroll to the far end of Embleton Bay. Cross Embleton Burn as it trickles into the sea. If you haven't already, you may want to take your shoes and socks off...
5. Look out for oystercatcher and other shore birds around the Emblestones as you approach the harbour at Newton Haven. Sometimes seals can be spotted basking at the far end of the rocks.
6. Climb up from the beach to Low Newton's picturesque village square. Take a break at the Ship Inn or look in at the National Trust info. Continue inland via a track that starts behind the village square, cottages and boat park.
7. After ¼ mile walking next to sand dunes and through a little woodland, you reach two wildlife hides that face out over the waters at Newton Pool nature reserve. The smell of meadowsweet in summer is delightfully strong.
8. Continue on this path towards Dunstan Steads. Dunstanburgh's precipitous cliffs loom large again as you pass the golf course.
9. After the castle, climb up to your right on a higher level track back to Craster.



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