

CARE FOR THIS SPECIAL PLACE

BERRY HEAD ROAD

FOOTPATHS

9. SOUTH WEST COAST PATH

7. QUARRY

4. VISITOR CENTRE & CAFÉ

5. ARTILLERY STORE

6. LIGHTHOUSE

8. BIRD HIDE

10. AREA OF SPECIAL PROTECTION

3. NORTHERN FORT

2. SOUTHERN FORT

1. MAIN CAR PARK & TOILETS

A HANDY MAP TO BERRY HEAD NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE



HISTORY AND GEOLOGY

Towering 200 feet above the English Channel, the headland once protected Torbay's valuable naval anchorage during the Napoleonic War (1803 – 1815). The two garrisoned forts, dating back to 1795, protected Brixham Harbour from the threat of a French invasion.

Northern Fort (3) – housed 600 men (regular army & local militia) plus 12 42-pounder cannons located on the end of the headland.

Southern Fort (2) – protected the Northern Fort from land attack and contained a barracks, powder magazine, kitchen and storehouse

During the 1780's, limestone was quarried from Berry Head and continued for over 200 years, in some years producing over 200,000 tons of material. The purity of limestone long made Berry Head important for agriculture, industry and construction and so extensive were the workings that in places the quarry floor falls below sea level.

Today the quiet seclusion of the **quarry (7)** is a refuge for wildflowers, insects and birds. The ruins of the forts can be enjoyed by all, whilst the working lighthouse, built in 1906, continues to keep mariners safe. Within the Northern Fort you can find; the **Guardhouse (4)** now home to an award-winning café, the **Artillery Store (5)** which has information on our 2nd most famous resident: the greater horseshoe bat, and the shortest, highest & deepest **Lighthouse (6)** in the country. The **South-West Coast Path (9)** runs through the reserve, originally used by the coastguard as a means to get from lighthouse to lighthouse patrolling for smugglers.

WILDLIFE

Berry Head is home to a colourful and rare assortment of plants, animal species and grasslands - the site attracts 200 varieties of bird, 50 of which breed within or close to the reserve and include the nationally threatened cirl bunting.

Peregrine falcons, sparrowhawks and kestrels can be found circling the headland whilst out to sea, fulmars, kittiwakes and gannets can be seen foraging for fish. From the **birdhide (8)** you can see our most famous resident, the guillemot. Here the largest colony on the south channel coast returns each October and numbers build through to breeding season (Mar – July) peaking at 1,400 strong. An

Area of Special Protection (10) safeguards the guillemots from disturbances by marine vessels.

28 species of butterfly including the rare small blue, flit through over 500 species of plant at Berry Head, a good number of them only occasionally found in the UK. These include the goldilocks aster, small hares ear, small rest harrow, white rock rose and honewort.

Finally, hidden in the dark recesses of Berry Head's quarry caves is one of Britain's most endangered mammals: the greater horseshoe bat. Alongside pipistrelles, seratinies, long eared bats and lesser horseshoes, these creatures of the night dance through dusk in pursuit of insects to feed on.

FISHING

Torbay was given a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) designation, at the highest level, in November 2013, from Oddicombe Beach, around to Berry Head, and beyond to Sharkham Point. Responsible anglers are drawn to this prime fishing location. Berry Head is well known for its beautiful fishing spots, down in the old quarry, surrounded by towering limestone cliffs.

Please help us by;

Berry Head NNR operates a honesty catch system that falls in-line with enforcement at Hopes Nose (Torquay). No individual shall be permitted to catch more than 20 mackerel within any 24 hour period. Any surplus mackerel must be returned to the sea immediately.

Please do not light any fires, BBQ's or stoves which can cause wildfires and huge damage to our rare grasslands or heathland. Take care with stray matches and cigarettes.

Take all litter home with you (especially snagged or broken hooks & line)

No camping. No individual shall be permitted to erect a tent, shelter or bivouac.

Minimum fish landing size, please use guidelines from the Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority.

www.torbay.gov.uk/asb-environment-and-nuisance/hopes-nose/



DOG WALKING

We welcome you to walk your dog whilst being mindful of this special and sensitive place. Here's some things dog walkers can do to help:

Our livestock are used to graze extensively across the site. We use North Devon/Aberdeen Angus cattle which are very tolerant and pose no threat to people or dogs. In the more difficult to reach areas we use Hebridean/Soay sheep, however these can be found anywhere across the reserve at various times of the year. Be aware of each area as you pass through (check gates for signs) and obey any restrictions.

You can help us by;

Around cattle: Keep your dog under close control.

Around sheep: Keep your dog on a lead at all times.

Keeping your dog under close control near cliffs, if unsure how your dog will react perhaps use a lead again. Areas with cliffs: End of headland, Southern Fort, Quarry Rd and some coast path sections.

Clean up your dog's mess. The reserve's low nutrient grassland cannot tolerate high nutrient faeces and it can lead to damage of our rare habitats. On the spot penalty fines for dog fouling are £75 and can lead to a fine of £1,000.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code

