

CAERLAVEROCK

- Linear woodland and estate walk with an all ability trail for first 100m**
- 3.5km/2miles**
- 1 hr**
- Hard surface paths, beaten earth, boardwalks and gate.**
- Moderate**
- Boots for full route. Binoculars recommended**

PARKING Head out of Dumfries on the B725, pass through Glencaple and continue along the shore road into Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve. The car park is a layby approximately 2½ miles from Glencaple on the right hand side. If you wish to cycle to Caerlaverock follow National Cycle Route 7 from Dock Park heading for Gretna.

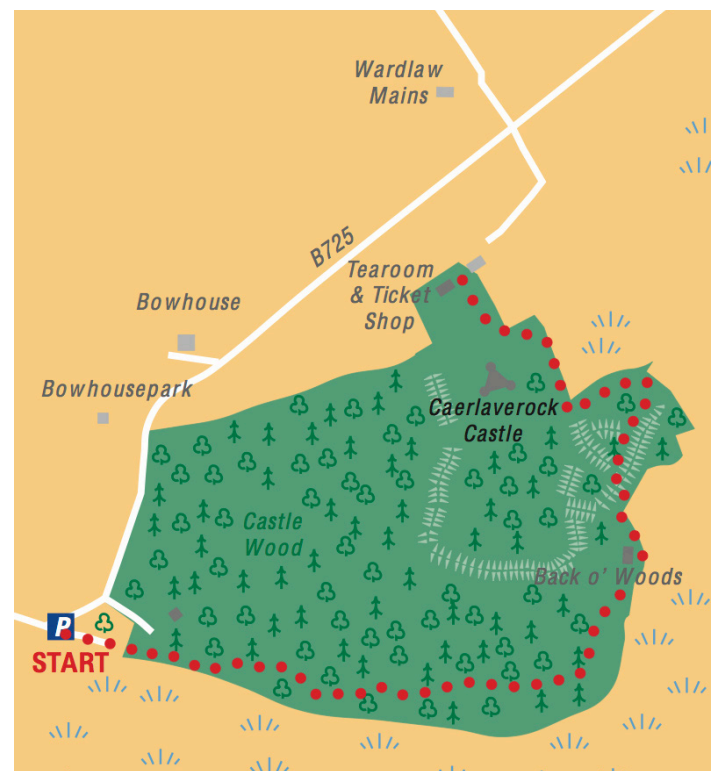
START You can learn about the local wildlife from the information boards before entering the nature reserve. The first 100m of this route is an all ability trail which terminates in a viewing area overlooking the merse. At the viewing area bear left along the woodchip path and enter the woodland. The path runs along old earthbanks associated with the early castle and then skirts along a strip of spruce trees. Mid way along the path there is an option to turn off to a picnic area and bird-viewing seat. This is waymarked from the main path.

The huge mudflats of Blackshaw Bank are home to millions of shellfish and worms which provide sustenance for thousands of waders and wildfowl, such as curlew, oystercatcher and shelduck. The entire population of barnacle geese from Svalbard (an island off northern Norway) spend winter on the Solway and a large proportion choose the merse and farmland around Caerlaverock. The rare and protected natterjack toad can also be found here; in fact Caerlaverock is home for the northernmost population. It can be identified by a distinctive yellow line along its back and can be heard croaking on warm summer evenings. At the southeast corner of Castle Wood the path turns left and on past Back o' Woods Cottages. Turn right along the woodchip path for a short circuit through a recently re planted broadleaved woodland with views out to neighbouring farmland.

This path rejoins the main track just below the site of the first castle at Caerlaverock that was abandoned around 1277 when the buildings started to subside and collapse. Continue to the impressive sandstone ruins of the second castle, a unique triangular medieval fortress.

The castle and grounds are managed by Historic Scotland. The entry charge is displayed on signs and tickets must be purchased from the visitor centre. The Castle, playground, visitor centre and toilets are open all year and the tearoom opens from April to October.

Return along the same route.



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Leave gates as you find them - Keep dogs under close control at all times - Keep to paths across farmland - Take care on country roads
Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls - Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery - Take your litter home with you
Protect wildlife, plants and trees - Guard against risk of fire - Make no unnecessary noise.