

MULL OF GALLOWAY

- Circular coastal walk**
- 3.5km/2 miles**
- Allow 1 hour**
- Grass path, beaten earth and minor road. Kissing gates.**
- Moderate**
- Stout shoes or boots recommended**

PARKING is available at the Mull of Galloway car park at the southernmost tip of the Rhins. The nature reserve here is managed by the RSPB and is open all year round. There is a visitor centre, open from Easter to October.

START From the car park, go through the gate and follow waymarkers to the visitor centre. Before the lighthouse was built in 1828, shipwrecks were common around the exposed, rocky coast. Although it is no longer manned, the lighthouse is still very important for navigation and is operated remotely.

From the visitor centre, cross the road and go straight ahead towards Lagvag Point. This is one of the best spots on the reserve to view some of the thousands of seabirds that nest on ledges and in hollows in the steep cliffs. Black guillemots, kittiwakes, fulmars and razorbills are regular sightings. A small number of puffins also nest here but are less easy to spot. Away from the cliffs, grassland and heather attract birds such as linnet and twite and wildflowers provide nectar for an array of butterflies and moths.

Return to the car park where a signpost indicates the rest of the walk. Go through the kissing gate and follow the clifftop path. The route is fairly exposed and on a windy day can be particularly exhilarating. In spring and summer there is a profusion of wildflowers covering the clifftops, including spring squill and purple milk vetch. Out at sea, grey seals and porpoises are often seen. The views along this part of the coastline are superb, not least because of its position at the southernmost tip of Scotland. On a clear day you can see to the Irish Hills, the Lakeland fells and the Machars, as well as the Isle of Man.

Continue to follow the clifftop path and look out for a kissing gate on your right leading to Kennedy's Cairn, from where good panoramic views of the Mull can be had. This is the best place to spot the remains of an Iron Age fort, stretching between the bays at East and West Tarbet. It was thought to have been used as defence against marauders from the north.

Returning to the main path, follow it to reach a kissing gate leading into a field overlooking the picturesque bay at West Tarbet. From here, head towards the road then turn right and follow it back to the car park.



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