



Langdon Cliffs, Upper Road,  
Dover, Kent CT16 1HJ

TRAIL

**Walking**

GRADE

**Moderate**

DISTANCE

**4 miles (6.4km)**

TIME

**1 hour 20 minutes**

OS MAP

**Explorer 138;  
Landranger 179**

Contact

01304 202756

whitecliffs@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

**National  
Trust**

[nationaltrust.org.uk/walks](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/walks)

# White Cliffs of Dover wildlife walk

Discover the spectacular coast and countryside of south-east Kent and stroll along the famous White Cliffs of Dover. Walking from Langdon Cliffs to South Foreland Lighthouse, you'll see great numbers of butterflies and wild flowers. Summer is also a great time to encounter the cliff-side antics of kittiwakes, fulmars and peregrines.



## Terrain

Naturally uneven and undulating surfaces with some steep slopes. Height gain of 350ft (107m). Do not approach the cliff edge as it can crumble at any time, and take special care when the ground is wet, as the grass and exposed chalk can become very slippery. Please keep dogs under close control at all times due to stock grazing.

## Things to see



### Wild flowers

Chalk grassland is a great habitat for wild flowers. It used to cover large parts of Europe but today only fragments remain, mainly in England and France. Exmoor ponies graze the grass at Langdon Cliffs, helping to keep it short and prevent scrub invading and smothering the wild flowers. Look out for the yellow flowers of wild cabbage, from which our garden varieties were bred. Spring and summer bring the colourful blooms of greater knapweed, horseshoe vetch and oxtongue broomrape (a parasitic plant living on the hawkweed oxtongue). In spring, look out for the rare early spider orchid, only found on the south coast.

### Insects

This area is well-known for its butterflies, especially the small, adonis and chalkhill blues. As the name suggests, the chalkhill blue butterfly is commonly found in chalk grassland habitats where it can find its favourite plant, the horseshoe vetch. Red admiral, painted lady and clouded yellow can be seen in large numbers during migration when some come to the UK from Europe or Africa. July is the month to spot several rare moths like the day-flying straw belle. Also look out for Britain's largest fly, the endangered hornet robberfly, ermine moth caterpillar overwintering in hawthorn bushes, and a recent colonist, the wasp spider.

### Birds

Watch out for kittiwakes in summer, breeding on tiny ledges on precipitous cliffs. They can be very noisy birds. Also listen out for the melodies of skylark and meadow pipit filling the air. As well as kittiwake, fulmar live here in summer and you may see a peregrine falcon swooping from the cliff walls where they breed. They hunt pigeons to feed their fledglings. Some areas of scrub have been left to grow as they provide shelter for warblers like the whitethroat, and for colourful seed eaters, linnets and yellowhammers.



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## Start/end

Start: Gateway to the White Cliffs visitor centre, grid ref: TR336422

End: Gateway to the White Cliffs visitor centre, grid ref: TR336422

## How to get there

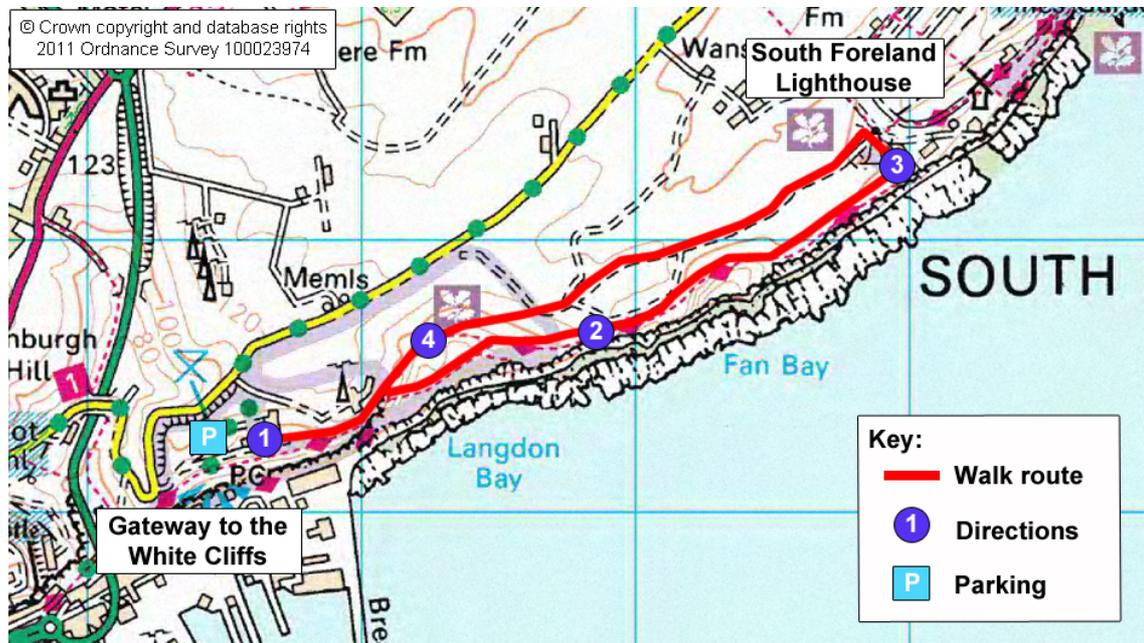
**By foot:** Signed paths from port, station and town centre. Located on Saxon Shore Way

**By bike:** National Cycle Network route 1 runs close by (see sustrans)

**By bus:** Stagecoach in East Kent Diamond 15, Canterbury to Dover to Deal, alight Castle Hill then 1 mile (1.6km) via Upper Road - no footpath; 15a, alight Dover Docks

**By train:** Dover Priory, 2.5 miles (4km)

**By car:** From A2/A258 Duke of York roundabout take A258 towards Dover town centre. After 1 mile (1.6km) turn left into Upper Road. From A20, go straight ahead at four roundabouts. Turn left at second set of lights into Woolcomber Street, then right onto Castle Street at the next lights. After 0.5 miles (0.8km) turn right into Upper Road



1. From Gateway to the White Cliffs visitor centre, head east to the coast path with the sea on your right. The cliffs are being eroded by 2-4in (5-10cm) every year although in winter storms several tonnes can fall. The battering of the sea means the cliffs stay white, otherwise they would be covered in green vegetation. Here you can also see the remains of the Convict and Military Prison above the Port of Dover.

2. Keep on this path, looking out for where the chalk cliffs meet the English Channel, and take in magnificent views of the French coast from the rim of Langdon Hole. On a clear day you can see 21 miles (33.8km) across the Channel. The chalk downland habitat along the cliff tops is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) due to the array of flora and insect life which thrives here. Above Fan Bay look out for pyramidal and fragrant orchids in June.

3. South Foreland Lighthouse was built in 1843 on a spot where lighthouses have stood for over 350 years. It helped mariners navigate the infamous Goodwin Sands until it was decommissioned in 1988. It is famed for being the first electrically lit lighthouse and the site of the first ever international radio broadcast. Lighthouses replaced simple beacon fires lit along the cliffs. The remains of a Roman lighthouse (Pharos) can be seen within the grounds of Dover Castle, near the church.

4. Return to Gateway to the White Cliffs visitor centre, following a surfaced path just inland, this time keeping the sea on your left.

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