

Sites of wildlife interest



13 The Coast: Lizard Point to Whitburn



POPPIES

ACCESS

There is a good path all the way along the coast, but the cliffs can be dangerous so keep well away. If you venture on to the rocky shore make sure that you are not endangered by rising tides.

TRANSPORT

There is a regular bus service along the Coast Rd (no. E1).



LIZARD POINT



500m

The coastline is of international importance for the birds that visit each winter. Purple sandpiper and turnstone arrive in significant numbers from Scandinavia and the far north to feed on the diverse marine life of the shoreline.

Every time the tide goes out it reveals rocky platforms and pools that are home to animals such as mussels, limpets, whelks and winkles. During winter this provides vital feeding for many birds. Purple sandpiper and turnstone are present in internationally-important numbers, and for this reason the coast from Trow Point to Whitburn is designated as an International (Ramsar) and European (Special Protection Area) Wildlife Site. Sanderling, ringed plover and redshank are also present in nationally-important numbers.

The coastal path gives good views over the shore, whilst at high tide thousands of golden plover and lapwing can be seen roosting in flocks in the adjacent fields.

For ornithologists Whitburn Bird Observatory is an ideal place to watch the autumn passage of sea birds along the coast. During the right conditions birds like shearwaters, skuas and gannets can all be seen (keys can be obtained from the Durham Bird Club, telephone 01429 867550).

At low tide the rock pools at Whitburn are a magical place to explore. Look carefully amongst the bladder wrack and sea lettuce and you may find such delights as butterflyfish, sea scorpions hermit crabs and brittle stars.

