



Ayres National Nature Reserve

Walk 1: MWT Nature Discovery Centre to the Point of Ayre

7km (4.4 miles) of flat walking but the ground is uneven in places. Dogs must be on leads, no longer than 3m long, in the bird nesting season when signs are shown on the NNR (usually from the 1st April to 31st July) to comply with Ayres NNR Byelaws.

Start at the Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) Ayres Nature Discovery Centre what3words.com/carnivore.daytime.eternally. Follow the grass path, marked blue on the map, to the Point of Ayre light house and return along the same route or follow some of the other paths marked on the map for your return route. Opening hours for the MWT Ayres Nature Discovery Centre can be found at: www.mwt.im/nature-reserves/ayres-nature-discovery-centre.

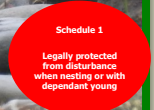


From late April to early May **Early Purple Orchids** *Orchis mascula* are flowering at the point marked **1** on the map (approx. 400m east of the Nature Discovery Centre). These orchids only grow at the Ayres and one other location on the Isle of Man. The orchids are growing on the back slope of the dune among the marram grass.

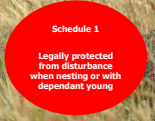


Look out for diving **gannets**, as you walk along path. Britain is home to 70% of the gannet population.

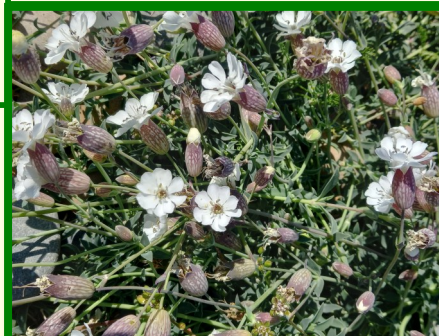
As you walk listen out for **skylark** with their long, melodious song high over head and **meadow pipits** that sing that sing while parachuting to the ground. Both these species nest on the ground making a cup shaped nest out of grasses.



Ringed plover nest on the shingle beach, they incubate their eggs for 3 weeks. When the tiny chicks hatch they run around the entire beach and sometimes the adjacent grassland looking for their invertebrate food. The parents keep a close eye on the chicks and protect them from danger and keep them warm. Ringed plover have an extended breeding season from April to August and can lay up to three clutches of eggs per season.



From April to the end of July, the Ayres NNR is an importance place for breeding **curlew**. Curlew lay up to 4 eggs in a nest on the ground. They incubate their eggs for at least 27 days. The chicks are mobile as soon as they hatch out and walk around with their parents looking for invertebrate food. It's another six weeks before the chicks can fly. If you are too close to the chicks the adults will fly around calling repeatedly, if this happens move away as quickly as possible.



Sea campion is another coastal specialist growing on shingle and cliffs.



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Sea kale flowers in early June. This is a shingle specialist and is only found in a few locations around the coast of the Isle of Man. Shingle is a very restricted habitat compared other habitats found on the Isle of Man.



Yellow-horned poppy is another shingle specialist and puts on a great show June.



Burnet roses flower early June across the heath.

Adult **common blue butterflies** are on the wing in May and August. The female has brown on her wings and the males are an iridescent blue. Bird's-foot-trefoil is the caterpillar food plant.



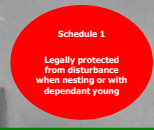
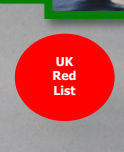
Xanthoria parietina has many common names including common sunburst lichen and shore lichen. This amazing lichen is able to survive growing on rocks including some of the undisturbed shingle stones.

The flock of **eider** is increasing, with males abandoning the females at their nesting sites and gathering at their favoured locations around the Island including the Point of Ayre. They will be joined by females and juveniles after the breeding season.



Rock samphire is restricted to only a few locations around the coast of the Isle of Man.

Look out for **grey seals**. Seals love to see people when they are in the sea and they feel safe. When they are hauled out on the beach they are very wary of people and are easily startled. Seals are legally protected under the Wildlife Act 1990 and it's an offence to disturb them. Please adhere to signs and be sure not to disturb seals when they are resting.



The only nesting site for **Arctic terns** on the Isle of Man is the Point of Ayre. From May onwards, they can be seen and heard fishing for sand eels and small herring along the coast. During the nesting season a temporary fence is in place to protect the eggs and chicks. This species is struggling to raise chicks on the Island due to predation.

Legend

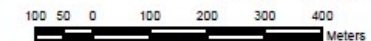
- P** Parking
- Ayres NNR Walk 1
- ==== Highway
- Paths
- Cranstal Drain (shown on the 1869 map)
- National Nature Reserve (NNR)



Ayres NNR

DEFA

Scale 1:12,943



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email: mapping@gov.im website: <http://www.gov.im/dige/planning/cartography.xml>



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