

The North Down Coastal Path

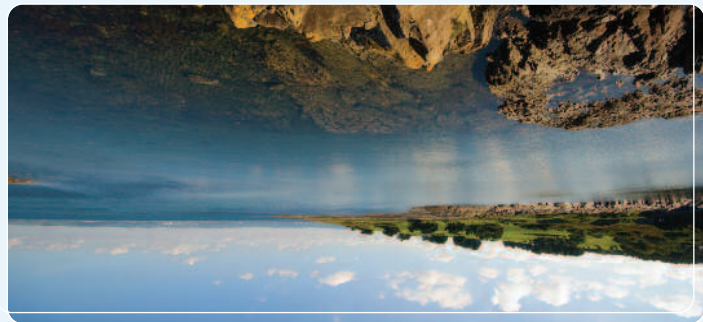
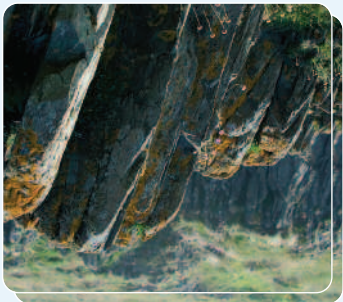
The North Down Coastal Path is a 25.5km s (16 m iles) Linear way aym arked trail extending from the esplanade in Holywood C.o. D ow n through coastal habitats and country parks to reach the rocky outcrop of Orlock, Portavo.

The path traverses a varied and beautiful landscape rich in history and nature. Military defences, heritage buildings and monuments can be found throughout as well as a wealth of geology and wildlife.

Walked in its entirety or sections, the path offers something for walkers of all abilities whether this is a casual stroll around the marina or an energetic ramble around the rocky coastline of Orlock.

The Environment

Geology
The rocky exposed outcrops along the Coastal Path are among the oldest in Ireland dating back 400-500 million years. In comparison the rocks on the opposite side of the Lough are just 40-50 million years old.



The sedimentary rock found here is resistant to weathering so little sea erosion has occurred along the coastline in this section.

Graptoites have been found along the Coastal Path, a primitive sea dwelling animal, which appears like pencil marks on the rock. A collection of these is housed within the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.



North Down Countryside Recreation

The Coastal Path

Transport and Travel

The proximity of the North Down Coastal Path to the railway line and the A2 main Belfast to Bangor Road means the trail is serviced well by public transport as well as many car parks.

By Bus

Ulster Bus
Service B2 or 502 Belfast – Holywood – Bangor
Service 3 Bangor – Donaghadee

By Rail

Northern Ireland Rail Service
Bangor-Belfast-Lisburn-Portadown Rail Service

By Car

Main car parks - Seapark Recreational Ground, Holywood, Crawfordsburn Country Park, Bangor Marina, Groomosport Harbour
For timetables & further information contact Translink on 028 90 66 66 30 (lines open 7am-8pm seven days a week) or visit www.translink.co.uk

Accommodation

Self catering, B&B's and Hotel accommodation can be found in the towns and villages of Holywood, Crawfordsburn, Bangor and Groomosport.

For more information visit www.northdowntourism.com or contact North Down Tourist Information Office on 028 9127 0069.

Symbols

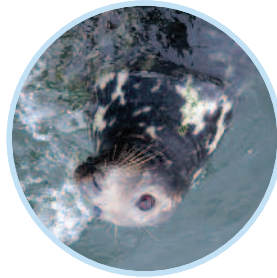


Walking accreditation symbol



For more information on accredited walks in Northern Ireland visit your definitive guide to walking at www.walkingni.com

Contact the Countryside Recreation Officer on 028 9127 0371 ext 8107



On land mammals can be observed. Fox and badger are plentiful as are rabbits and you might be lucky to come across an occasional otter. In the evenings bats abound along the coastal perimeter searching for flying insects. An abundance of plant life can also be found. Small areas of maritime heath turnstones searching the shorelines whilst dodging the waves is what makes this environment so enjoyable for those that take time to linger and look. As well as the sea, the land that forms the coast is also very important. This boundary, known as intertidal space is home to burrowing worms and crustaceans and the reason that many birds can be found feeding here. Marine mammals such as grey seals are a sign that food is plentiful and disturbance is low.

On the rocks lichens abound. These bizarre creatures are a uniquely successful partnership between two or three different organisms (a fungus in partnership with an alga and/or a blue/green alga). This partnership has allowed them to colonise habitats too hostile for almost any other organism.

Borough of North Down

Distances	miles	km
Hollywood → Cultra	2	3.2
Cultra → Grey Point	3.5	5.6
Grey Point → Bangor	3.5	5.6
Bangor → Groomsport	3.5	5.6
Groomsport → Orlock	3	4.8

A → B
C → D
All Ability Trail



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Attractions

1. Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club

The Club was formed in 1899 by an amalgamation of the Ulster Sailing Club with the Cultra Yacht Club. It became known as the North of Ireland Yacht Club until 1902 when King Edward VII deemed it the Royal North Of Ireland Yacht Club.

In recent years the club has played host to the Edinburgh Cup, the Squib Nationals, Mirror Irish Nationals as well as other prestigious events.



5. Bangor Marina

The marina, one of the largest in Ireland, is one of only 35 marinas internationally that have been awarded the prestigious Five Anchors by the Yachting Harbour Association.

It has grown steadily since its opening in 1989, with berths for almost 600 craft.

Also situated here are the Marine Gardens with ornate bandstand dating back to 1891 and the Pickie Fun park with its adventure playground, famous Pickie paddling pool and the Pickie Puffer.



2. Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

The award-winning Museum is made up of 2 entities illustrating the life and tradition of the people in the North of Ireland.

The Outdoor Folk Museum depicts life in early 20th century Ulster through almost 50 exhibitions including linen weavers dwellings & workshops, farmhouses and schools.

The Transport Museum displays Ireland's largest and most comprehensive transport collection ranging from horse drawn carts through to Irish built motorcars and from steam locomotives to the history of our ship and aircraft construction.

For information call the 24hour information line on 028 9042 1444

6. Tower House

Originally built in 1637 as a Custom House, this 17th Century Tower today serves as the Council's Tourist Information Centre.

The rarity of this tower and its architecture was recognised by the Department of the Environment's Historical Branch in 1979 when it was added to the "List of Buildings of Special Interest".



7. Ballymacormick Point

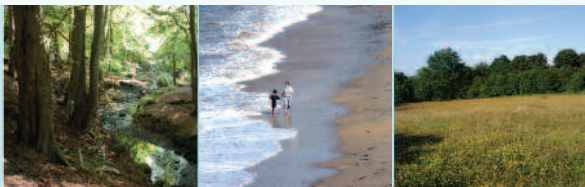
Owned by the National Trust, this rocky outcrop with its combination of rough grass and gorse is a good place for spotting birds and a range of plantlife.

Cockle Island just off the North Down Coast plays host to a breeding arctic tern colony.

3. Crawfordsburn Country Park

Owned and managed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency the Country Park not only incorporates the coastline and beaches of Helen's Bay and Crawfordsburn, but also boasts a wooded glen with impressive waterfall. The park is also home to Grey Point Fort.

For information call 028 9185 3621



4. Grey Point Fort

Situated within Crawfordsburn Country Park stands the wartime relic, Grey Fort Point.

The gun site was originally built to protect Belfast Lough from enemy invasion but was disbanded in 1957. The two original guns were sold as scrap following this but today a 12ft naval gun replacement is the centrepiece of this military museum.

For information on opening hours contact Crawfordsburn Country Park.

8. Cockle Row Cottages

Situated at the harbour in the scenic village of Groomsport, the former fisherman's cottages were refurbished in 1997 and today serve as a Tourist Information Office and a Heritage Centre.

The latter depicts what the cottages would have looked like in 1910 – a fisherman's cottage complete with furniture and open fire. For event information contact 028 9127 0069



9. Orlock Point

Orlock Point was identified as an important military defence site in 1912 when it was established as a Post War Signal Station. The remains of two brick artillery search light enclosures are still seen today.

Owned by the National Trust the area has a varied range of habitats and acts as a breeding ground for a range of common land birds.