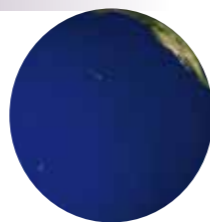


The sea is big...REALLY BIG

When you paddle your feet in the ocean, you are in direct contact with the 95% of the earth's habitable space which is water. Seas connect us all and the global circulation of seawater and its nutrients sustain much of the life we depend on.



But the oceans are at risk: pollution, including sewage and industrial and agricultural run-off, over-fishing and dumping all threaten this precious environment. We can all help to protect our oceans by reducing waste and not flushing non-degradable products, like cotton buds and sanitary products, down our toilets.

The Seaside Code

The seashore is a special environment. When you visit it you can help to take care of it and yourself by:

- knowing the tide times. The tide comes in twice a day and it can cut off your route back to land when you are on the shore. Tidal flow can create strong currents which can make swimming dangerous.
- remembering to replace any rocks or sand that you disturb as you explore the shore, because they may be homes to creatures. If you pick up animals or plants to have a look at them be sure to put them back where you found them.
- always washing your hands after handling items on the shore and make sure that children do not put anything in their mouths. Although the seaside is a wonderful place to explore, pollution can be present.

Lake District National Park

With its world renowned landscape, the National Park is for everyone to enjoy, now and in the future.

It needs a prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and vibrant communities, which sustain the spectacular landscape.

Everyone involved in running England's largest and much loved National Park is committed to:

- respecting the past
- caring for the present
- planning for the future

Lake District National Park Authority
Murley Moss
Oxenholme Road
Kendal
Cumbria
LA9 7RL

Phone: 01539 724555
Fax: 01539 740822
Minicom: 01539 792690
Email: hq@lakedistrict.gov.uk
Website: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk

Photographs by:
Charlie Hedley, Tony West
and LDNPA

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The Coast of the Lake District National Park



Welcome

to the coastal area of the
Lake District National Park

This coast, from Seascale to Millom, is quite different to the rest of the National Park. Here you can enjoy dramatic views across open sea and into the high fells of the Lake District. You can explore a shoreline that is home to all kinds of exciting plants and animals. Where the rivers of the western Lake District meet the sea there are dunes and estuaries rich with sea life and the birds which feed on it. Because of the area's special natural features, there are several nature reserves to enjoy as well.

A great way to explore the coast is by rail. The west coast line takes you close to many of the area's attractions, including Ravenglass and its scenic estuary, a Roman Bathhouse and "L'aal Ratty", the Ravenglass to Eskdale Railway. Close by are Muncaster Castle and Muncaster Mill. At Silecroft you can swim on a beautiful designated beach and at Drigg the Local Nature Reserve is a lovely walk from the station.

Exploring the area by foot is a pleasure. There are plenty of easy walks, or for the more adventurous, there are long distance paths like the Cumbria Coastal Way. All are marked on Ordnance Survey maps for the area. Cycling is very enjoyable here too; quiet country lanes meander down to the sea through pretty villages. There are lots of places where you can launch anything from a windsurfer to a small boat.



KEY

- Information
- Public toilet
- Public telephone
- Camping and caravanning
- Windfarm
- Lighthouse
- Church
- Main roads
- Minor roads
- Railway and station
- Sunday bus service
- Steam railway
- National Park boundary



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The sun shines best in the west

The sea and its associated weather govern life in the Lake District. Most of the winds blow onto this coast from the west and they are warm and full of moisture. After blowing across the low land of the coastal strip, air rises up the fell-sides and begins to cool. Since cooler air can carry less moisture than warm air, rain often begins to fall over the fells, leaving the coastal plain drier – hence the local saying that “the sun shines best in the west”.

The rain that falls on the fells runs into lakes and rivers and eventually back into the sea. It’s a cycle we all depend on and much of north-west England gets its drinking water from within the National Park.



Oystercatcher

An attractive black and white wading bird, it’s common not only on the beach but also on the farmland across the area.



Stonechat

Listen out for the ‘tac-tac-tac’ that sounds like stones being hit together. They nest on rough ground with low shrubs.



Glannoventa Roman Fort

Ringed plover

You can spot this active bird by its characteristic ‘run-stop-peck’ behaviour. Nesting above high tide - take care not to disturb their well camouflaged nests and young.



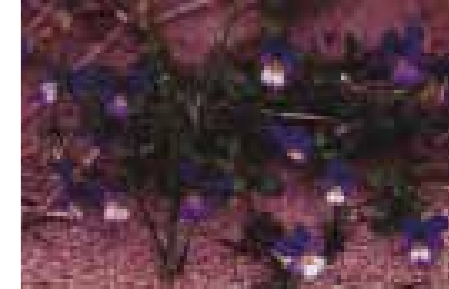
Natterjack toad

Though relatively rare in much of the rest of Britain, some of the largest colonies are found in the sand dunes and salt marshes of the National Park.

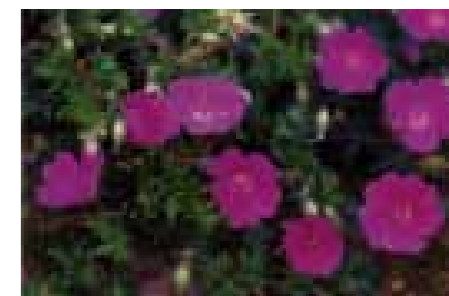


Honeycomb worm reefs

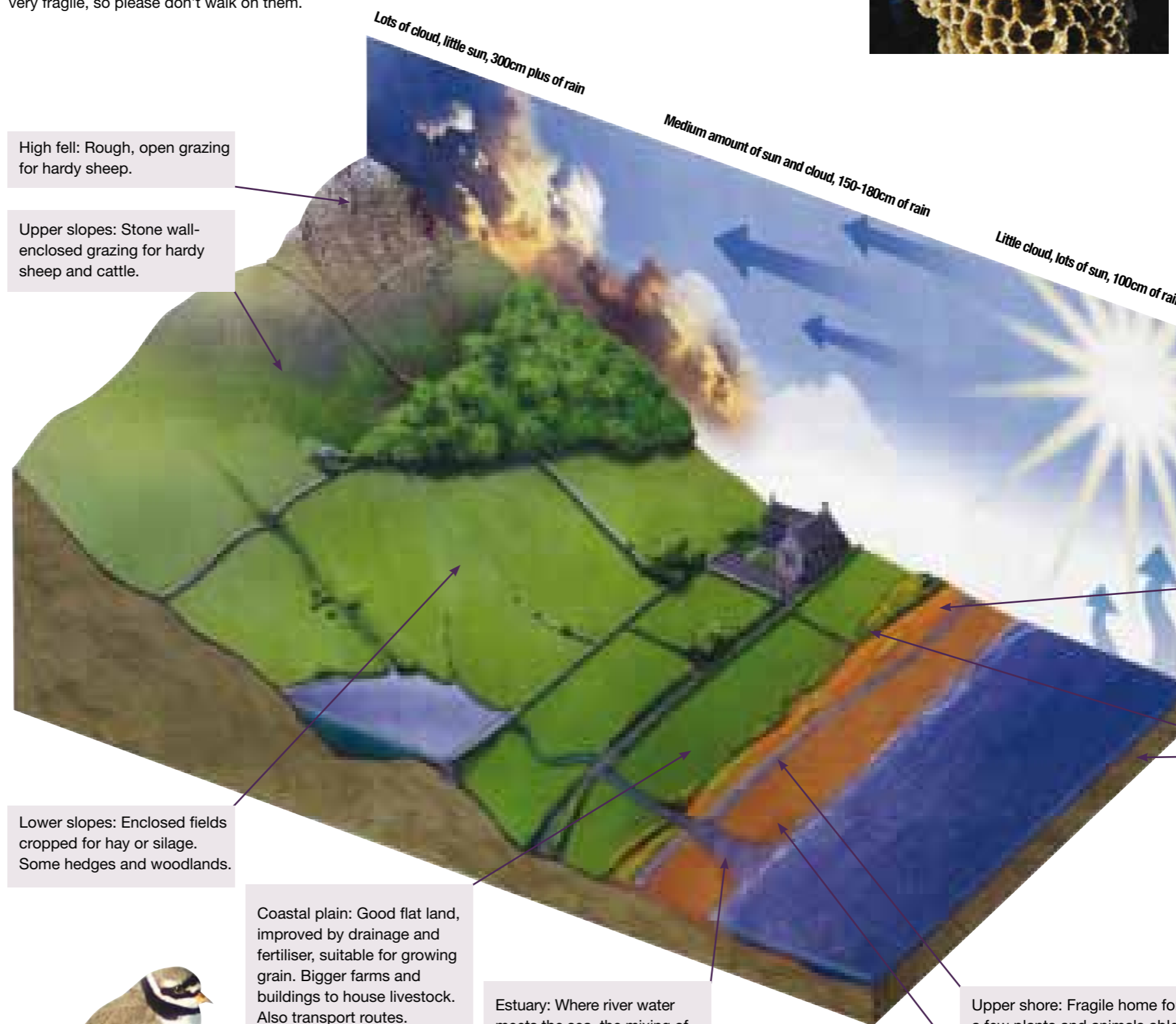
Cumbria has its own naturally occurring reefs. Formed from sand by the honeycomb worm, they can be 30 to 50 cm deep. Exposed at low tides, this is the best place to see these remarkable honeycomb habitats in the UK. They are very fragile, so please don’t walk on them.



Wild pansies



Bloody cranesbill



High fell: Rough, open grazing for hardy sheep.

Upper slopes: Stone wall-enclosed grazing for hardy sheep and cattle.

Lower slopes: Enclosed fields cropped for hay or silage. Some hedges and woodlands.

Coastal plain: Good flat land, improved by drainage and fertiliser, suitable for growing grain. Bigger farms and buildings to house livestock. Also transport routes.

Estuary: Where river water meets the sea, the mixing of salt and fresh water creates a challenging environment: sometimes salty, sometimes fresh. This mixing causes nutrients to settle out, so although an estuary is a difficult place to live, the few creatures which live here thrive. If you explore an estuary you will often see large numbers of seabirds, indicating just how rich the habitat is.

Inter-tidal areas: A harsh place where plants and animals must be able to withstand daily wetting and drying as the tides rise and fall. Despite these changing conditions, creatures such as mussels, barnacles and crabs thrive here and a tidal pool is a window into life between the tides.

Upper shore: Fragile home for a few plants and animals able to withstand little soil and the salty spray of storms. Often covered in pebbles or shingle.

Seaholly
An attractive ice-blue thistle with purple flowers, found amongst the sand dunes.

Dunes: Where the sea and wind bring sand back towards the land, sand dunes form. This dry, unstable and salty place is a special home for grasses that can bind the sand and for shrubs which can tolerate the salt. In the dips or ‘slacks’ between dunes, where water collects for a time, rare Natterjack toads breed.

Salty fringe: Good land but salt-laden winds and high spring tides and storms mean that it only provides rough grazing.

The sea bed: We rarely see the seabed because it is always covered by water. But just like the land, the seabed is very variable with areas of mud, sand and even cliffs. A whole marine ecosystem exists and, where sunlight can reach vast forests of seaweed grow.

‘The ocean’s bottom is a lot more interesting than the moon’s behind’ – author unknown.



Life on the edge

Temperature and rainfall along with soil type control which kinds of farming are possible in different locations. Here, the steady rise of the land from coast to fell means that different types of farming are carried out within a short distance from each other. This helps to shape the landscape.

Coastal history

Archaeologists have dated human history here back to the hunter-gatherer times. At Ravenglass, Glannoventa Roman Fort and Roman Bathhouse is part of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage site.

Please remember

The land in the Lake District National Park is nearly all privately owned and much of it is farmed. Because of this it is especially important that you use the Countryside Code to guide your activities in the National Park.

The fields and fells of the Lake District provide pasture for thousands of sheep. Between late autumn through to early summer the ewes are particularly vulnerable when they are either pregnant or have their lambs with them. Please keep your dogs under control and don’t let them worry sheep.