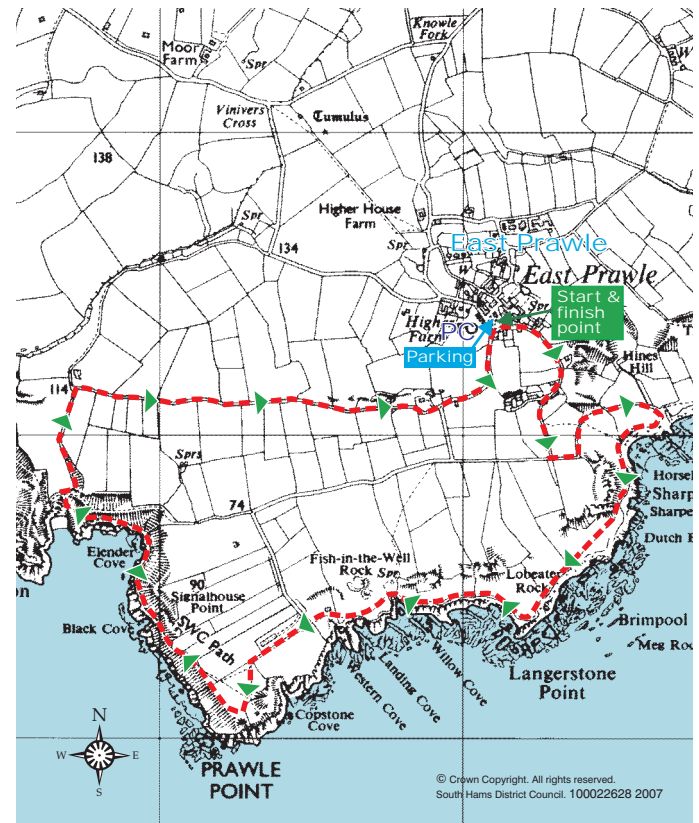


## East Prawle and Prawle Point

A wonderful walk taking in spectacular coastal scenery and ancient green lanes, in one of the richest spots in Devon for plants and wildlife.

Start:	East Prawle Village Green
Distance:	3.5 miles
Circular Walk:	Yes
Grade:	Strenuous
Terrain:	Coastal footpath with some uneven and rocky sections; green lanes; surfaced roads.
Obstacles & Steep Gradients:	No stiles but several steep climbs.
Public transport:	Extremely limited. Coleridge Community Bus runs from Kingsbridge to East Prawle once a week on Wednesdays, ring 01548 511309 for more details. For information on public transport in South Hams please call Traveline on 0870 6082608 <a href="http://www.traveline.org.uk">www.traveline.org.uk</a> .
Refreshment stops:	In East Prawle: 2 pubs: the Providence Inn and the well known Pig's Nose. Grunters Cafe open Easter - end of October; refreshments include cream teas and all-day breakfasts.
Toilets:	Public toilets situated immediately above the village green..
Parking:	Parking around the village green.
Accommodation:	Campsites, B&B, inns and guest houses in and around East Prawle. Please contact Kingsbridge Tourist Information Centre 01548 853195 <a href="http://www.kingsbridgeinfo.co.uk">www.kingsbridgeinfo.co.uk</a>
Other facilities:	In East Prawle there is a phone box just above the village green, and a small shop, also by the green.
OS map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Ref:	SX782364



### Directions

1. Starting out from the village green in East Prawle, head to the café, and turn right along the lane leading out of the village.
2. By the post box, turn left down the brideway signposted for Gorah Rocks, then left again down the old green lane which passes through a gate and between fields towards the sea.
3. Bear right at the finger post onto the coast path, signed for Prawle Point and follow the field edge path along the low cliff. In time you will see Prawle Point ahead, with the lookout station perched on top, and the aptly named Horse's Head rock below.
4. Continue along the cost path beyond Prawle Point. Turn right at the waymarker post above Maceley Cove, and then left after about 50 metres at the next waymarker, heading up hill and inland.
5. Turn right following the blue waymarked arrow onto another ancient track. This leads you back to East Prawle via a final stretch of metalled country lane.



## Heritage

In the field to the left as you drop down the bridleway after leaving the road out of the village, a tall standing post can be seen. This is a rare example of an old coastguard rocket post. It was used to simulate the mast of a ship in training rescue teams in the use of the rocket apparatus, a system of rescue from land to sea that has since been superseded, most notably by the helicopter.

Just before the climb up towards Prawle Point begins, the curious looking bunker to the left of the path is the remains of a radar station. It is one of two built at Prawle during the Second World War.

On Prawle Point stands a lookout station. Formerly a coastguard station, it was abandoned in 1982, but reopened in 1998 under the auspices of the National Coastwatch Institute and is now staffed by volunteers. The station welcomes visitors to pop in and say hello, and to peruse the display housed there. The name Prawle stems from the Anglo Saxon word 'Prawhyll' meaning lookout hill, and it seems likely that this spot has been used for that purpose for many centuries.

## Landscape

The area of low lying fields by the sea was formed as mud springs flowed over the cliffs behind many millions of years ago. These deposits have created a fertile, south-facing pasture and cropland. In the fairly recent past this land was renowned for its produce of cauliflowers, from fields 'top-dressed' with seaweed collected for the shore below.

Beyond the cliffs, rocky shelves run unevenly out into the sea. These unusual platforms were cut by waves towards the end of the last ice age - a time when the sea level was 7 metres higher than it is today.

By the path beyond Prawle Point, you may come across short rows of single large flat stone slabs set on edge. These are the remains of old field systems, still marked on maps, but no longer present on the ground.



## Wildlife

Prawle Point is the most southerly point in Devon. Because of this, it is both the departure and arrival point for many migrating birds and butterflies.

The climate and richness of the habitat also contribute to a tremendous natural abundance. Migrating butterflies including painted ladies, red admirals, and clouded yellows arrive here, and can be seen along with many other species of butterfly during the summer months, particularly along the lanes, which act as 'rides' for the butterflies.

The fields along the coast are rich in wildflowers, and are a haven for many birds, in particular the nationally rare Cirl Bunting. This is a small green and brown bird with a yellow and black striped face. It thrives on the arable weed seeds here and feeds its young on the abundant grasshoppers and similar insects in the area. Stonechats and Whitethroats are also common sightings, perched on gorse and blackthorn scrub along the cliff edge.

Residents of the many rockpools along the coast include the colourfully patterned cones of topshells, and the spiral whorls of winkles, with typically purple or yellow shells. The Oystercatcher, with its orange beak and black and white plumage, is one of the many wading birds to be seen here. Further out over the water, the seabirds include gannets, wheeling on long black-tipped wings and plummeting dramatically into the sea to catch fish.

The lacy white rosettes of wild carrot grow abundantly along the coast path, and the small blue stars of spring and autumn squill are also to be found. Seals can sometimes be seen from the coast path here, and very occasionally dolphins and even basking sharks.

