

## Places to see flowering plants and ferns in Wigtownshire

The list below is obviously only a limited selection. Please contact the Vice-County Recorder with any queries. Visitors should follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

### **Burrow Head** (O.S. Sheet 83, NX4634)

Take the signposted footpath from the village of Isle of Whithorn southwards along the west side of the bay. Then follow the rocky shore, where Northern Marsh-orchids *Dactylorhiza purpurella* can be found in wet places, before the path climbs onto cliff tops. Walk to an old concrete lookout building before returning or continue further. The cliff flora is very colourful in the spring and early summer and notable plant species include Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, Juniper *Juniperus communis*, Purple Milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* and Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum*. Peregrines, Ravens, various seabirds, Grey Seals, Bottle-nosed Dolphins, Grayling and Wall butterflies have all been seen.

### **Castle Kennedy Gardens** (O.S. sheet 82, NX1161)

The gardens are sign-posted from the A75 about two miles east of Stranraer and there is a charge to enter them. See <https://castlekennedygardens.com>. In addition to the attractive garden (and café) there are to be found some interesting wild plants. These include clumps of Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* (some of which may have been planted) and species-rich grassland with Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Sheep's-bit *Jasione montana*. A large pond (the Round Pond) has Lesser Water-plantain *Baldellia ranunculoides* growing around the margins and Pillwort *Pilularia globulifera* has been recorded.

### **Corsewall Point** (O.S. sheet 82, NW9872)

Look for a sign to Corsewall Point from the B738 north of Kirkcolm, a village to the north of Stranraer. Follow the narrow road, which turns into a rough track as you approach Corsewall Point. Park in a small parking area just to the east of the lighthouse. Scots Lovage *Ligusticum scoticum* is plentiful on the rocky headland and a species-rich flush above a cove has Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris*, Northern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, Slender Club-rush *Isolepis cernua* and Black Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans*. Many other plants have been recorded along this rugged coast including Roseroot *Rhodiola rosea*, Chaffweed *Lysimachia minima* and Allseed *Linum radiola*. This is also a great place to look for passing seabirds and Porpoise.

### **Craignarget shore** (O.S. Sheet 82, NGR NX2451)

This stretch of shore is found about five miles south-east of Glenluce, alongside the A747. The beach here is covered in large patches of shingle and is backed by a flat, grassy area popular with tourists, but rich in plants. Oysterplant *Mertensia maritima* and Sea-kale *Crambe maritima* grow on the shingle. The grassland has areas with a short open sward where Sea Stork's-bill *Erodium maritimum*, Knotted Clover *Trifolium striatum* and Sea Fern-grass *Catapodium marinum* occur, while patches of longer grass hold Yellow Vetch *Vicia lutea* and Wood Vetch *Ervilla sylvatica*. Ground immediately to the east of what appears to be a small, fenced M.O.D. property is particularly worth looking at.

### **Fell Loch and Loch Hempton area** (O.S. Sheet 82, NGR NX3054)

These two lochs are situated about four miles south of Kirkcowan. The road is largely single-track and care is needed in parking. Note that dogs are not welcome here. Patches of White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba* occur in the lochs, with Slender Sedge *Carex lasiocarpa*, Small-fruited Yellow-sedge *Carex oederi*, Quillwort *Isoetes lacustris*, Awlwort *Subularia aquatica* and Great Sundew *Drosera anglica* amongst those plants around the margins. Small burns and wet and dry heath between the lochs also contain a good variety of plants such as Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*. This area is also good for dragonflies.

### **Garlieston to Rigg Bay** (O.S. Sheet 83, NGR NX4846)

Park at the southern end of Garlieston harbour, which is located to the south of Newton Stewart. Take the path along the shore to the sandy beach at Rigg Bay, then return. There are a good variety of plants to be found in woodland, shingle beach (e.g. Sea-holly *Eryngium maritimum*), freshwater marsh and saltmarsh (e.g. Lax-flowered Sea-lavender *Limonium humile* and Glasswort *Salicornia* species). This is another lovely walk. Alternatively, you can park in the Galloway House Gardens car park (there is a small charge, but the gardens are well-worth seeing) and walk to Rigg Bay beach through the gardens.

### **Isle of Whithorn Bay & Stinking Port** (O.S. Sheet 83, NGR NX4736)

This is an attractive small village with a harbour and a nice café. It is located south of Garlieston. There are small areas of saltmarsh (with Lax-flowered Sea-lavender *Limonium humile*) and grassland (with Spiny Restharrow *Ononis spinosa*) in a walk to the north to Stein Head. The harbour has some interesting coastal plants on the rocky west side, such as Saltmarsh Flat-sedge *Blysmus rufus* and Slender spike-rush *Eleocharis uniglumis*.

### **Kilhern Moss** (O.S. Sheet 82, NGR NX1963)

An area of blanket bog, this site is close to New Luce. Take the narrow, minor road east from the village and look for a small parking area on the right after about 2 miles. This is just past where the Southern Upland Way comes down to the road along a rough track. Walk uphill along the SUW for a mile or so, then turn sharp right at a derelict farmstead. The bog is found at the top of the steep slope to the left. It holds a range of *Sphagnum* bog-mosses in addition to flowering plants such as Bog-rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*, Great Sundew *Drosera anglica*, Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica*, Nordic Bladderwort *Utricularia stygia*, Cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and White Beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba*. Birds that may be seen in the area include Raven, Red Grouse and Hen Harrier.

### **Logan Botanic Garden** (O.S. Sheet 82, NGR NX0942)

Located 14 miles south of Stranraer, Logan Botanic Garden is Scotland's most exotic garden, with plants from South and Central America, Southern Africa and Australasia. It is well worth a visit (there is a charge) and has a bistro and shop. More information can be found at <https://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/logan-botanic-garden>.

### **Mull of Galloway** (O.S. Sheet 82, NGR NX1530)

Signposted south of Drummole, there is a car park and café above big cliffs, with great views all around. The cliffs below the café have much Golden Samphire *Inula crithmoides* and Rock Sea-lavender *Limonium recurvum* subsp. *humile*, as well as large sea bird colonies. You can walk around the Mull tip (a RSPB reserve), past the lighthouse and see plants of heath, marsh (with Northern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella* and Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) and cliff slope. Purple Milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* is frequent along the cliff tops west of the lighthouse. There is also a longer walk west along the cliffs from the café, where Purple Oxytropis *Oxytropis halleri* has been seen in the past, then over the road to a small bay and returning along the coast on that side. Other plants to be seen include Seaside Centaury *Centaureum littorale*.

### **Port Castle Bay (St Ninian's Cave)** (O.S. Sheet 83, NGR NX4235)

Located and signposted a short distance to the west of Isle of Whithorn, there is a car park from where you can walk down to the shingle beach. The cave may still be closed due to a rock fall, but you can still view it from outside. Ivy Broomrape *Orobanche hederæ* grows on the Atlantic Ivy *Hedera hibernica* that covers the cliffs. There are also interesting plants such as Green Figwort *Scrophularia umbrosa* along the burn just above the beach and on the cliff path to the east.

**Port Logan Bay** (O.S. Sheet 82, NGR NX0940)

A beautiful bay with a sandy beach and car park, not far from Drummore. There is a narrow band of sand dunes with a good colony of Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and abundant Sea Bindweed *Calystegia soldanella*. The shingle near Logan Fish Pond has a population of Sea-kale *Crambe maritima*. In 2022 a single specimen of Oysterplant *Mertensia maritima* was tucked away down a rough slope just past the Fish Pond and rocky grassland there holds Bloody Crane's-bill *Geranium sanguineum*, Wild Thyme *Thymus polytrichus* and Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum*.

**Port of Counan** (O.S. Sheet 83, NGR NX4136)

Access to this location is along a rough track through a farm at Claymoddie, near Glasserton. Park carefully off the track at the top of a steep cliff slope down to the shingle beach. Walk down the track, where there are steep banks to the right of it that are rich in plants including, in some years, a large population of Bithynian Vetch *Vicia bithynica* and butterflies such as Dingy Skipper. Wood Vetch *Ervilla sylvatica* occurs in the scrub further down and amongst the vegetation on the shingle beach are Carline Thistle *Carlina vulgaris* and Portland Spurge *Euphorbia portlandica*.

Michael Jeeves

BSBI Vice-County Recorder for Wigtownshire (VC74)

December 2022