

BAT TRAIL-9

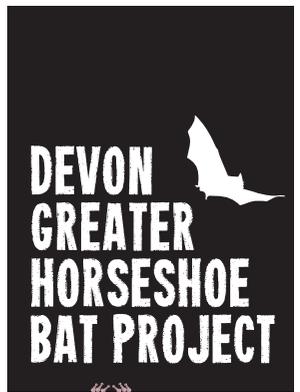
Little Dartmouth & Dartmouth Castle



Photo: View of the sea

Dartmouth sits on the western bank of the estuary of the River Dart, which is a long narrow tidal ria that runs inland as far as Totnes. It remains a busy port and is very popular with tourists, as well as the greater horseshoe bats who live here! Leaving the busy part of town around the marinas, the countryside rolls out into farmed fields, deep lanes, coastal cliffs and wooded valleys.

Small but perfectly formed, this satisfying circuit is full of character and interest, offering glorious views from the cliffs, the tang of the sea close up on the rocky shore, the rich history of the castle and the beautiful River Dart.



Look out for bats if you take your walk during a summer evening, some bats come out at dusk, like the noctule, but others including the greater horseshoe wait until its dark. This walk will take you through some great 'batty' places, so look out for the different things described in the directions as you travel along.

ROUTE INFO	
Start:	National Trust car park, Redlap, Little Dartmouth. By donation.
Distance and timings:	3.5 miles (approximately 2 hours)
Circular Walk:	Yes
Terrain & Description of paths	Muddy in places. Not suitable for wheelchairs
Obstacles and Gradients:	Stiles, steps and steep sections
Public Transport:	Bus No's. 93 and 111. Dartmouth Ferry
Toilets:	Dartmouth Castle car park
Refreshment & Other Facilities:	Café at Dartmouth Castle. Variety in Dartmouth
OS Map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Reference and postcode:	SX 874 491



Photo: Hedgeside sheltered path



Photo: Phil Richardson



Photo: Frank Greenaway



Photo: Good insect habitat



Photo: View to the Sea

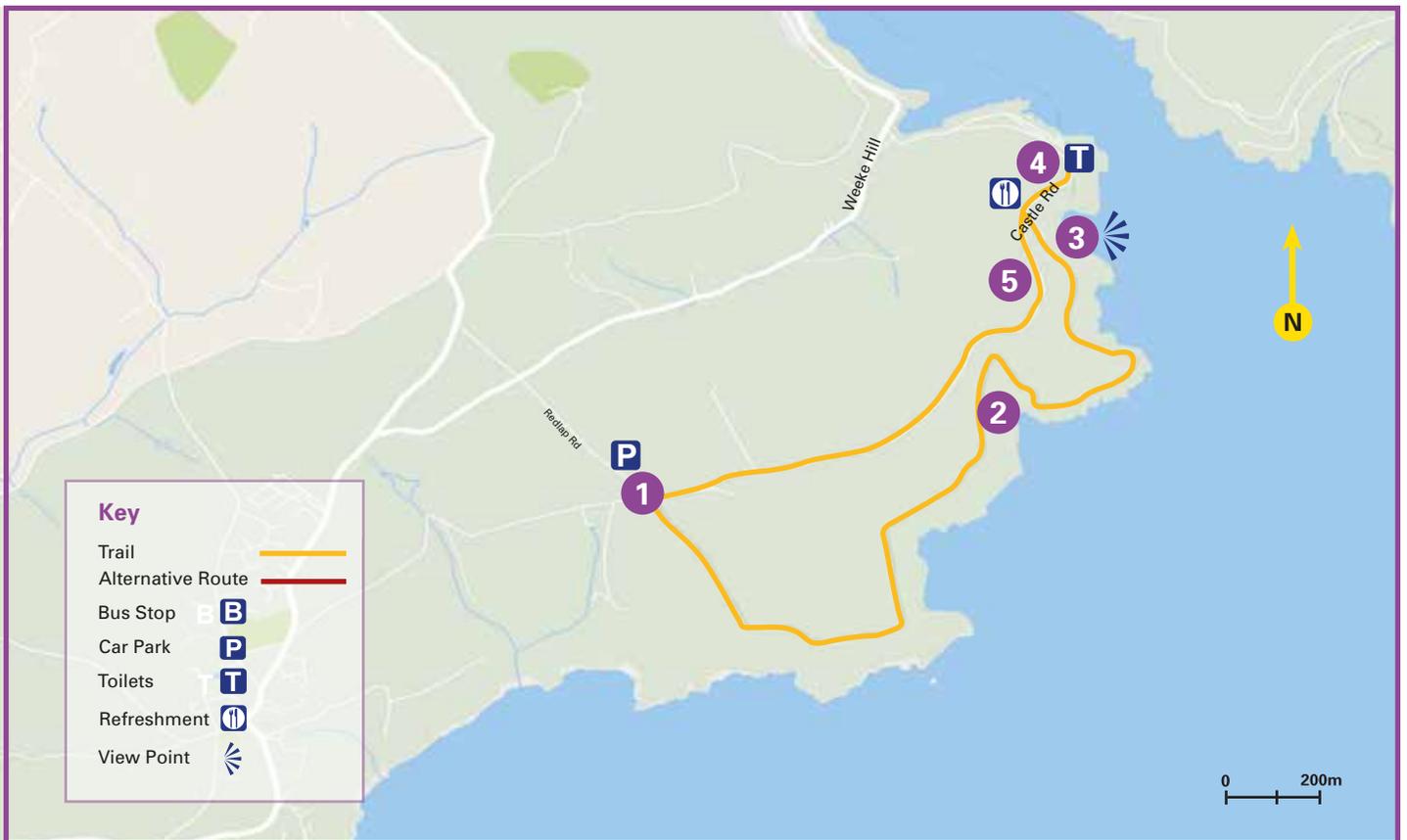


Devon Wildlife Trust



Supported by The National Lottery® through the Heritage Lottery Fund





DIRECTIONS

- 1** Start your walk through the seaward side car park signed 'Link to Coast Path, Dartmouth Castle 2.5 m'. Follow the path along the field edge and once you go through the kissing gate head to the right of the bench and bear left along the coast path. Cattle grazed pasture is really important for greater horseshoe bats as they rely on cow pats to provide a home for one of their favourite foods – dung beetles! They will use the hedges for navigating through the landscape, but they will also perch on the lower branches while they eat their insect prey.
- 2** Drop down through the valley beyond Compass Cove, following the 'acorn' waymarker. Areas like this with woodland or scrub, provide great navigational aids to Greater Horseshoe Bats, but also allow them to feed on insects which tend to congregate in relatively sheltered areas away from the wind. Towards the bottom of the valley bear right, over a stile, and then left. Follow the coast path down the steps and along above the tide line.
- 3** Continue along the path as it passes through woods. Bear right where the path joins the lane. Here you have a choice; either continue down the road or turn immediately right upon joining the road and turn down the footpath. Turn right at the waymarker and follow the coast path down some steps and above the sea. This route enjoys fine sea views but involves several flights of steps and some 'up and down'. The route emerges past a picnic area onto the road. Turn right and immediately right again as directed below to rejoin the main route.
- 4** Turn right down the steps signed 'Coast Path, Dartmouth Castle' to visit the castle. To return, retrace your route back up the steps and turn left along the road. Churches and old buildings can be perfect bat roosts for many bat species. Greater horseshoe bats need to be able to fly straight into their roost and hang upside down, meaning that they can't roost in trees or bat boxes. But churches, barns, caves and mines make great homes for them.
- 5** Follow the road, passing the sign reading 'Access to Compass Cove Cottages and Coastguard Station'. Where the road ends, go straight on through the gate and follow the bridleway. Continue straight through Little Dartmouth Farm and back to the car park.