

EAST AYRSHIRE
COALFIELD



ENVIRONMENT
INITIATIVE

LAGOONS ROUTE



This walk takes you through Knockshinnoch Lagoons, a 130 hectare Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve. The path goes around a disused spoil heap or bing where native woodland, heather and wildflowers are flourishing. It overlooks a series of ponds and marshes, some of which can be drained for a period in late summer and spring to create mudflats attractive to migratory birds. These waders and ducks use the Nith Valley as a route between the Solway and Clyde estuaries.

Knockshinnoch Lagoons reserve owes its existence to the legacy of deep coal mining in this area. In the mid 20th century the mines were sending vast quantities of pumped pit water and coal washings into a huge lagoon. This became one of Ayrshire's prime bird-watching venues, where nationally important numbers of waders, including many rarities, could be expected to turn up. After the mines closed, the site dried up and the birds no longer came. In 2004, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, with funds from sources including the local coal companies, restored the pools and wetlands you will see today.

Time = 1 hour

Length approx. 1.6 miles or 2.54km

Route - Walk towards the river and follow the swan waymarkers.

Cross through the car park, round past the shops and over the main road at the pedestrian crossing. Turn right then left up Castlehill. Take this road, passing the Arthur Memorial Church, to its end at the entrance to Knockshinnoch Lagoons. Following the purple swan signs round the reserve will bring you back to where you started.

Note that the path is rough in places and has some areas of sloping land where wheelchair users may require assistance. Otherwise the route is level and on a good surface.

Navigation (1 least skill/5 most skill) = 1

Stamina (1 least/5 most) = 1

Mobility (1 least/5 most) = 2

The East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative was able to improve these paths during 2012 thanks to funding from Ayrshire LEADER and the Cumnock and Doon Valley Minerals Trust.

The East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI) is a partnership between local authority, conservation bodies and industry, working together to enhance, conserve and promote the environment in East Ayrshire.

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