



WALKS
AROUND
THE FLOW

8

South Ronaldsay

HOXA HEAD



WHERE IS IT?

This circular coastal walk runs around the end of the headland beyond St Margaret's Hope, offering a diversity of wildlife, great views and a wealth of remains of the World War I and World War II Coast Batteries which defended Hoxa Sound.

The walk is around 2 miles (3km) long. It runs next to steep cliffs in places and there can be wet and muddy patches.

The walk starts just beyond Hoxa Tearooms. To go clockwise around the circuit, continue south past the tearooms, along the farm track until you reach the crest of the hill overlooking Hoxa Head. After an interpretation panel and gate, the track bears left towards the concrete buildings of the Hoxa Battery. **Do not** enter or climb these buildings as some are now very dangerous, but a route can be take around the right-hand side of the cluster of buildings to where a small gate allows access through the fence to a coastal path. Follow this path to the right around the coast and past the Balfour Battery. Once past the Balfour Battery, take the path east inland to join the road by the Tearooms.

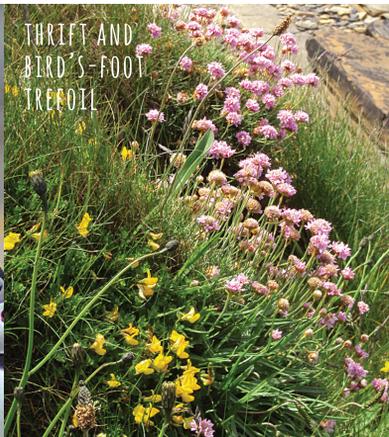
WHAT WILL I SEE?

- Superb views down Hoxa Sound, past Flotta to the uninhabited islands of Switha, Swona and Stroma, with the north coast of Scotland beyond
- Porpoises can be seen breaching off Hoxa Head on still days at any time of year, with a chance of dolphins, minke whales and killer whales (orcas), especially in the warmer months
- Spring brings a small colony of puffins, other breeding seabirds and beautiful displays of coastal flowers
- Remains of 4 inch and 6 inch gun emplacements from WWI and WWII
- The WWII Hoxa Battery, with its complete range of concrete buildings (some of which are collapsing) and remains of the bases of accommodation huts
- Balfour Battery, the only twin 6-pounder gun battery in Orkney with paired emplacements, hence the two striking Director Towers

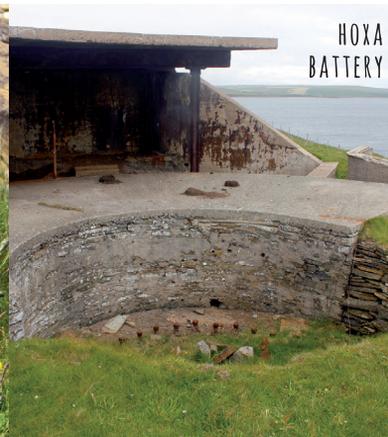
ORKNEY
VOLE



PUFFINS



THRIFT AND
BIRD'S-FOOT
TREFOIL



HOKA
BATTERY



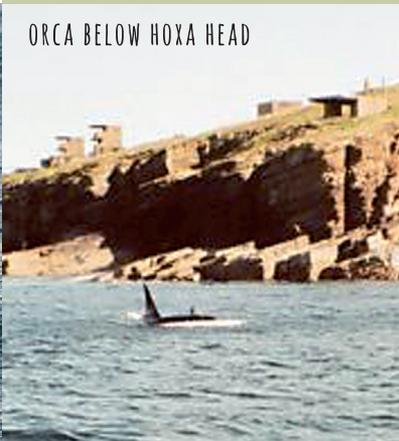
PORPOISE



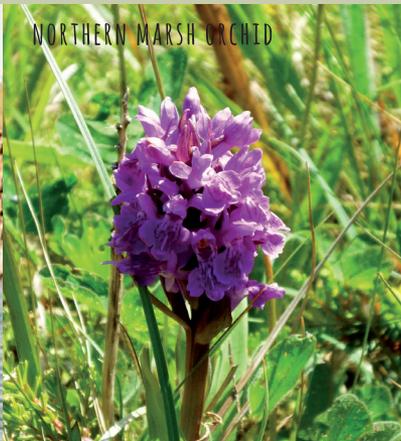
BLACK GUILLEMOTS



DISTANCE 2 MILES 3 KM **GRADE** MODERATE **DURATION** 1-1.5 HOURS (CIRCUIT)



ORCA BELOW HOXA HEAD



NORTHERN MARSH ORCHID

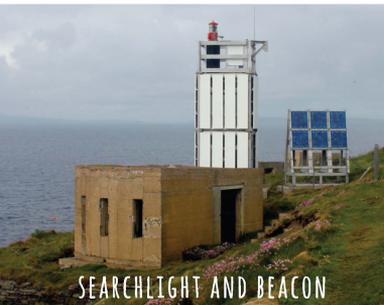


BALFOUR BATTERY

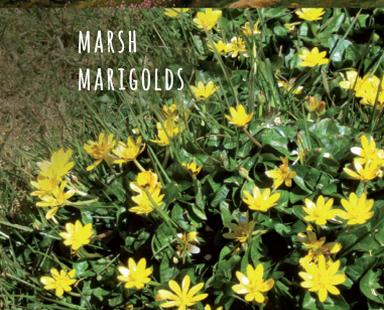


WALKS AROUND THE FLOW

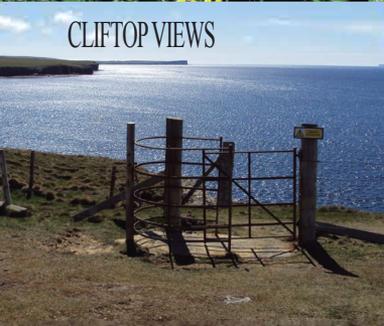
EIGHT WALKS AROUND THE FLOW ·
TAKE THESE TRAILS TO ENJOY A SPECIAL LANDSCAPE
RICH IN WILDLIFE AND HISTORY



SEARCHLIGHT AND BEACON



MARSH
MARTIGOLDS



CLIFTOPT VIEWS

WHAT SHOULD I REMEMBER?

The going is moderate with some uneven ground. The track can be muddy and the cliff path is steep and sometimes slippery. Livestock graze the site at certain times of year, as Hoxa Head is part of a working farm, so please keep dogs under control. Please do not enter the old concrete buildings, they are no longer safe.

Follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code -

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

- Keep dogs under control at all times
- Wear suitable footwear and be prepared for variable weather
- Let someone know your route and when you will return
- Avoid disturbing livestock or crops
- Leave gates as you found them
- Respect wildlife and take special care in the breeding season
- Bring your litter away with you - leave only footprints, take only memories!

