

North Pennine Birdwalks

Walk 8: Cowshill



Landscapes
for life
.org.uk

NORTH PENNINES
One of the
AONB family

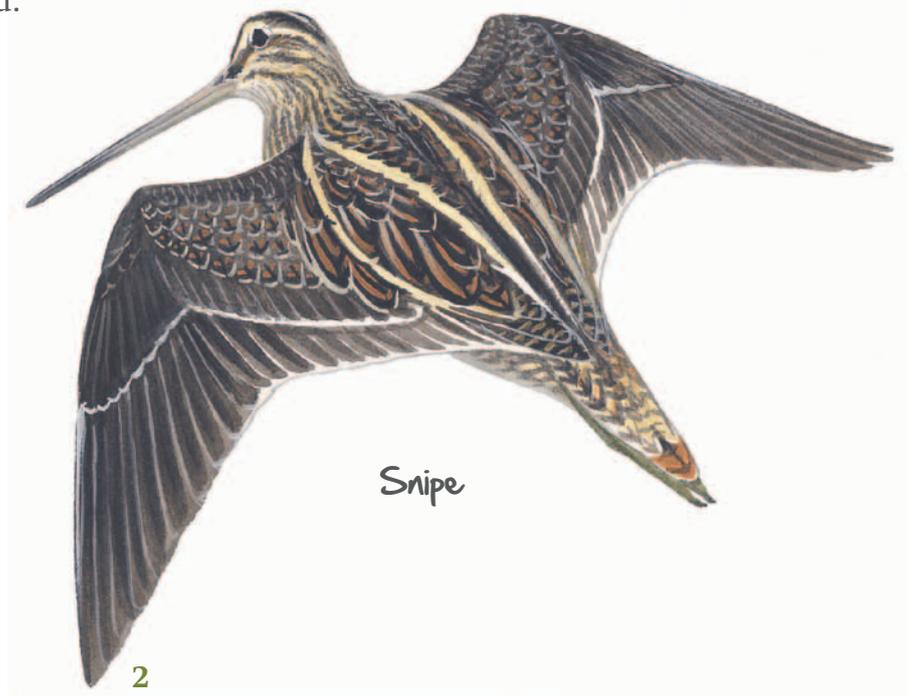
The Birdwatchers Code of Conduct

Birds are very vulnerable to disturbance, especially during the breeding season. It is all too easy to inadvertently harm a bird or its young while trying to watch them.

For example, if an adult bird is prevented from returning to its nest, eggs or chicks may quickly chill and die. Straying from a footpath towards a nest site may also leave a scent trail that a predator is later able to follow.

To ensure that you enjoy watching birds without harming them or their young, please always follow this code of conduct:

- The welfare of the birds must come first. Disturbance to birds and their habitats should be kept to a minimum.
- Keep to footpaths, especially during the bird breeding season (March – August).
- Avoid disturbing birds or keeping them away from their nests for even short periods especially in wet or cold weather.
- Do not try to find nests. **All birds, nests, eggs and young are protected by law and it is illegal to harm them.**
- Keep dogs on a short lead.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Take your litter home with you.



Walk 8

Cowshill



Allotment grassland, Upper Weardale

The pastures and allotments in Upper Weardale form a distinctive fringe around the edge of the heather moorland. Typically tussocky with clumps of rushes, these grasslands are an important nesting habitat for wading birds and large numbers can be seen and heard during the breeding season. The adjacent moorland is home to red grouse and golden plover and may sometimes be graced by the presence of a short-eared owl.

Keys

Easy Grade Walk

Suitable for most people: easy, comfortable walking, may be some stiles.

Medium Grade Walk

Typically a country walk with some hills, stiles and muddy paths.
Boots advised.

Hard Grade Walk

Hill walk. May have steep or strenuous climbs. Rough moorland.
Boots essential.

A guide is also provided to indicate the best times of year to see key bird species. This can be interpreted as follows:

BEST TIME TO VISIT



Please be aware that the weather can change rapidly in the North Pennines. Always carry suitable wet weather clothing with you and remember that visibility will be poor at higher altitudes in low cloud conditions.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Durham County Council. LA100049055. 2012.



Front cover illustration and all bird illustrations are by Mike Langman. Other images are © Natural England/Charlie Hedley or © North Pennines AONB Partnership.



Information is correct at the time of production (Aug 2012). Every effort has been made to ensure that information is accurate. However, the AONB Partnership and its Staff Unit cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions. Please check critical information before travel. Inclusion is not a recommendation by the AONB Partnership and in itself is not necessarily a guarantee of quality.



North Pennines AONB Partnership, Weardale Business Centre, The Old Co-op Building, 1 Martin Street, Stanhope, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 2UY.

Information Point



1:50,000 – Landranger 87
1:25,000 – Explorer OL31



Public toilets in St Johns Chapel (4.5 km). Pubs in Cowshill and St Johns Chapel. Local shops in Wearhead (1 km) and St Johns Chapel



Linear route
2 km (1.2 miles) each way



Hard. May be muddy in places. One steep ascent on tarmac. Navigation may be difficult in misty conditions



In Cowshill at NY855406



Visit www.northpennines.org.uk for information on green places to stay



Limited parking on grassy triangle at junction of the minor roads leading to Crooked Oak and Wallish Walls (NZ057501)



Bus stop in Cowshill. For information call Traveline on 0870 608 2 608



Snipe

Walk Directions

Walk to the road from the car park, turn right and cross the bridge. Take the footpath leading off to the left alongside a beck. On meeting a track through some houses turn right.

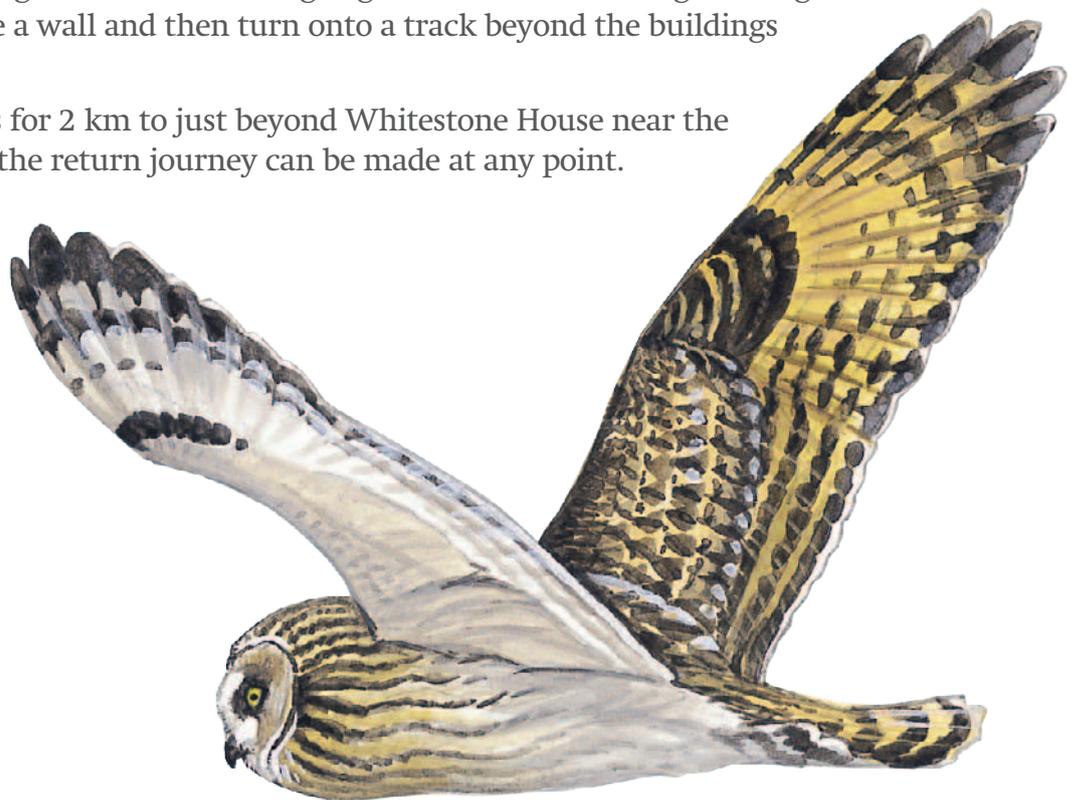
Turn left when the track meets a minor road and walk uphill. At the top of the hill opposite some farm buildings turn right, go through the gate and then walk with a fence on the left.

The fence line continues as a line of old hawthorns (ignore the line of hawthorns going up the hill) and then as the remains of a wall (linear mound of semi-buried stones). Walk alongside this with it on your left.

On reaching a length of standing wall continue straight ahead with the wall on your right. The wall is present only as a mound of semi-buried stones for part of the way. The ruined wall leads up to an intact stone wall with a large wooden gate in the corner. Go through this gate and cross the field to another wooden gate. This gate leads out to Moss Moor, go through it and turn right to follow the stone wall on the edge of the moor. Walk around the edge of the moor keeping the wall on your right.

On meeting a wall line, go through the gate and walk diagonally down across the allotment towards High Rush. On reaching High Rush, turn left and go through the gate. Walk alongside a wall and then turn onto a track beyond the buildings at High Rush.

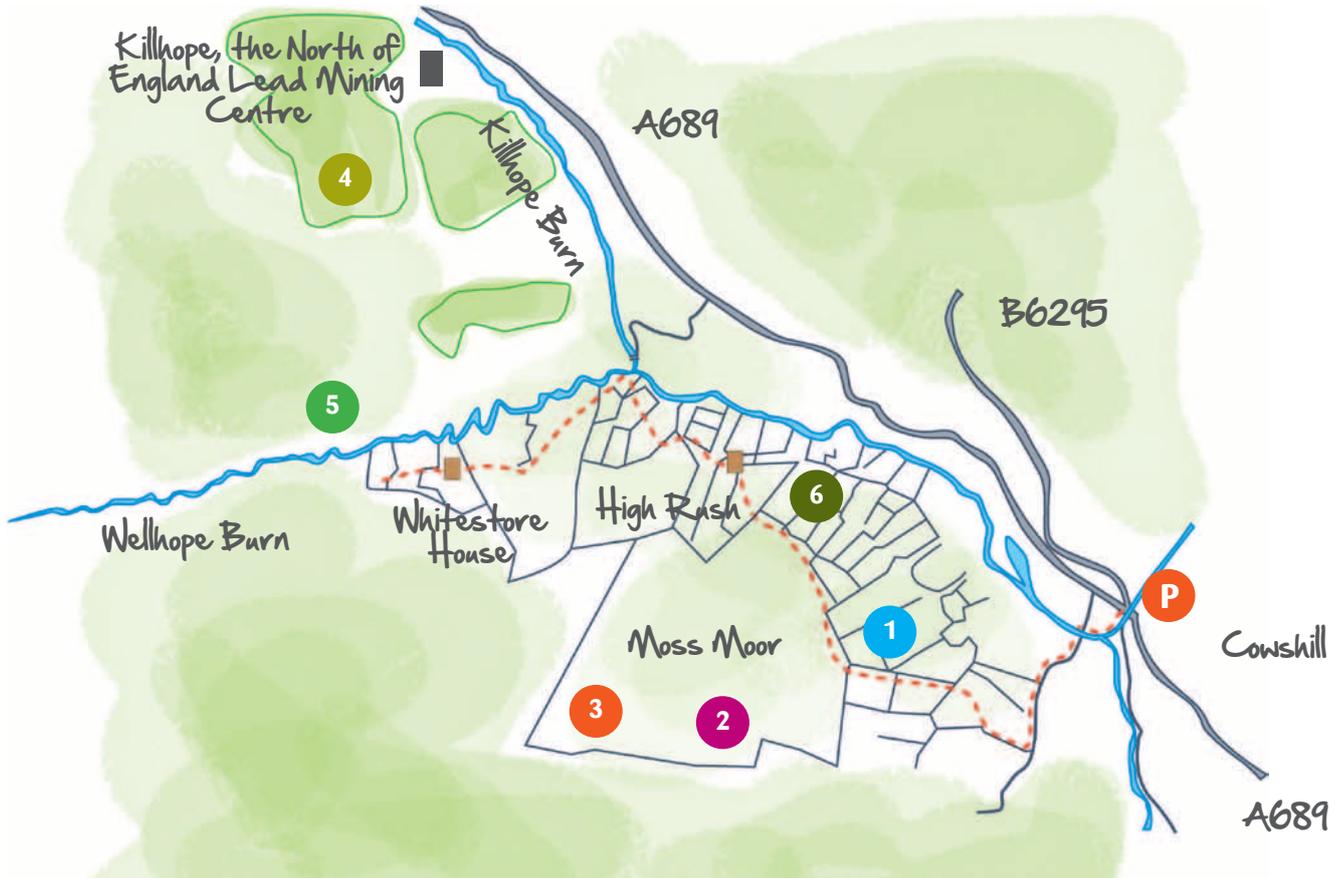
This track continues for 2 km to just beyond Whitestone House near the Wellhope Burn and the return journey can be made at any point.



Short-eared owl

Walk 8

Cowshill



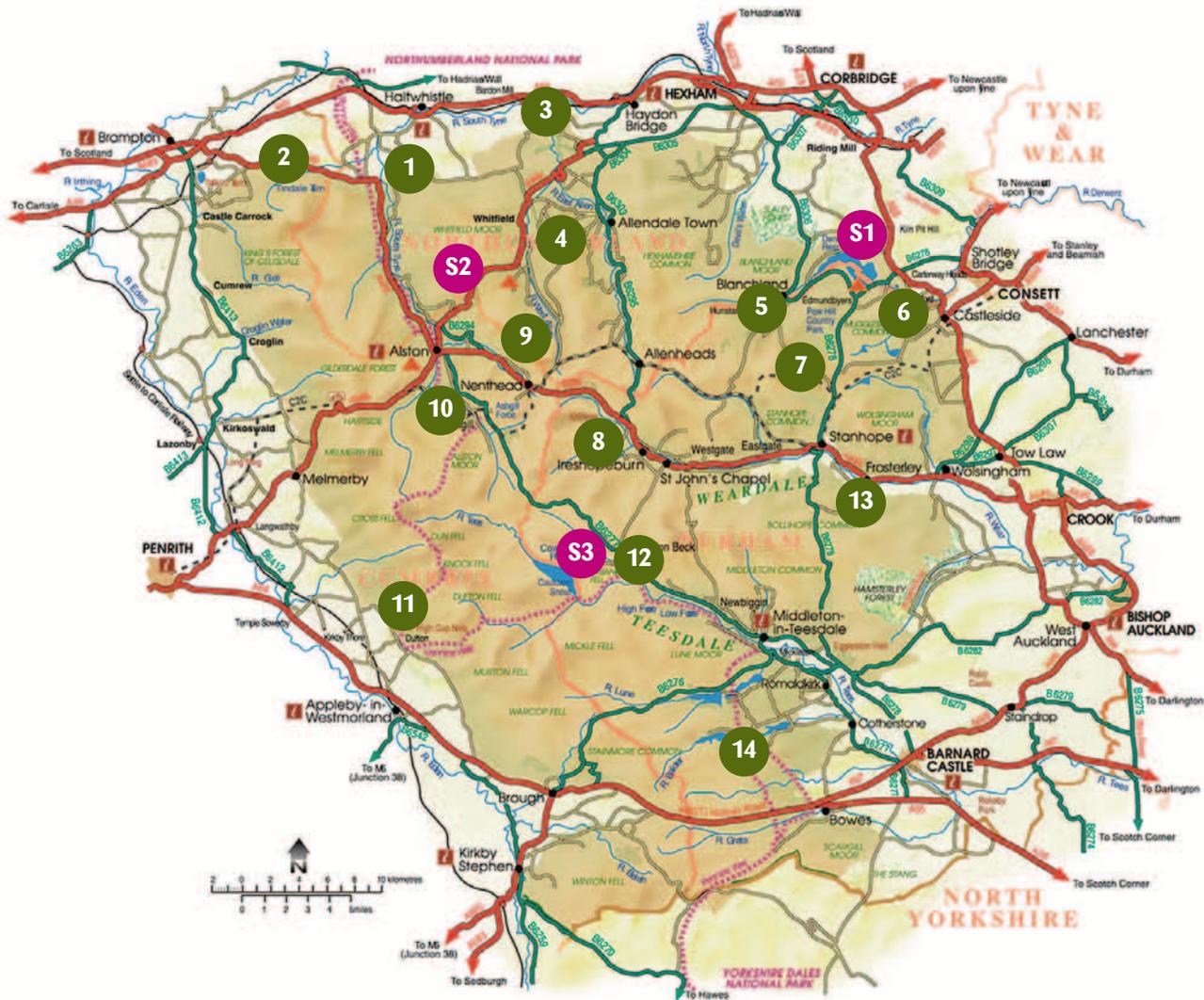
- 1 Lapwing and snipe breed and feed in rushy pastures and allotments.
- 2 Red grouse naturally pick up grit to aid their digestion. Look out for small piles of white medicated grit. This is put out by moorland managers to improve the health of red grouse by reducing internal parasitic worms.
- 3 Red grouse and golden plover breed on the heather moorland. Watch out for hunting short-eared owls - during their springtime courtship display, male short-eared owls clap their wings together with sharp pistol-like cracks.
- 4 Blocks of conifer woodland planted on the moorland edge during the 1960s and 70s damaged many areas of heather moorland and blanket bog. Interestingly, these woodlands now provide a valuable refuge for red squirrels in the North Pennines.
- 5 Many native broadleaved trees have been planted recently in small valleys and ghylls in the North Pennines. These should benefit black grouse in particular as they feed on the buds in winter.
- 6 Brown hares and grey partridge may be seen in areas of tussocky grassland fringing the moorland.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC



Map of the North Pennines AONB showing location of Walks and Sites



- 1 Lambley and the South Tyne
- 2 Tindale Tarn
- 3 Allen Banks and Staward Gorge
- 4 Chimneys on Dryburn Moor
- 5 Blanchland
- 6 Derwent Gorge
- 7 Burnhope Head
- 8 Cowhill
- 9 Wellhope Moor
- 10 Garrigill
- 11 Dufton Pike
- 12 Upper Teesdale
- 13 Howdon Burn
- 14 Blackton Reservoir
- S1 Derwent Reservoir
- S2 Ouston Fell
- S3 Harwood Beck and Widdybank

NORTH PENNINES



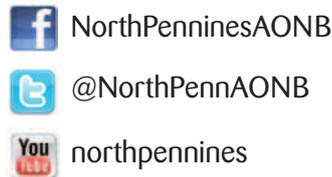
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



The North Pennines is one of England's most special places – a peaceful, unspoilt landscape with a rich history and vibrant natural beauty. In recognition of this it is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The area is also a Global Geopark – an accolade endorsed by UNESCO.

This 5.6 mile (in total) linear route explores the pastures and allotments around the village of Cowshill in Upper Weardale. These grasslands are an important nesting habitat for visiting wading birds in the spring and summer.

North Pennines AONB Partnership
www.northpennines.org.uk
+44 (0)1388 528801
info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk



The AONB Partnership has a Green Tourism award for its corporate office

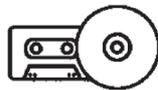


Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another format.

info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk
01388 528801



Braille



Audio



Large Print

This pdf download has been funded by:



...as part of their support for the North Pennines AONB Partnership