

BARRICANE BEACH

WOOLACOMBE

Grid Reference SS45344



Beach profile for Coastwise North Devon
Marjorie Heath

INTRODUCTION

Woolacombe is a seaside resort on the coast of North Devon, which lies at the mouth of the valley (or 'combe'). It is a popular location for surfing attracting thousands of people each year. The rolling surf brings unbroken Atlantic breakers from across thousands of miles of ocean to pound on this three mile long stretch of golden sand. There are many establishments offering tuition and equipment hire in addition to many hotels/holiday apartments bed & breakfast amenities..

Barricane Beach is situated between Woolacombe and Mortehoe (a stone built village dating back to the Domesday Book)

It is a sheltered west facing cove full of nooks and crannies with numerous rock pools, gullies and stones with views across the Bristol Channel and on a clear day Lundy Island .can be seen. It is exposed to the strong Atlantic winds and waves which, following stormy weather, brings an abundance of marine life within its shores.

Most notable feature is the shallow sloping sandy beach famous for cowries and other exotic sea shells located at the upper shore line - these shells are brought in on the Gulf Stream and not found anywhere else in the country.

The beach falls within the North Devon's Voluntary Marine Conservation Area and was designated SSSI in 1989 for its geology interest - approx. 8.2 hectares and also lies within the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is renown for its dramatic cliffs/landscape.

ACCESS/MAN'S IMPACT

Access to the beach is from the grass headland situated along Mortehoe Road where there is restricted parking (additional parking can be found along The Esplanade and also in Woolacombe where there are 2 car parks (£5 per day) These car parks are approximately a 5 minute walk away from the beach

From the headland there is a steep concrete path (with hand rail) leading down to Barricane Beach Café situated at the top of the beach which is open for the summer months. This path is suitable for wheelchairs although the steep gradient must be taken into account - a further 4 (metal steps) will take you onto the beach



There are no toilet facilities on the beach - the nearest located at Woolacombe car park.

No lifeguards on the beach but it is generally considered safe for families and surfers



all visitors to observe

Dog notices displayed for

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS - ROCKS



The Cliffs are Morte slate and Pickwell Down sandstone. The slates are grey in colour with white quartz veins - the quartz is formed by sandstone which has been forced into the cracks of the rocks and compressed. The quartz is more resistant to erosion than the slates

and sandstone and thus stands out in prominent places. Fossils which can be found in evidence between the layers of Morte slates - the slates having been broken off by the waves.

Jagged rocks with deep crevices/gullies and rock pools can be found on both sides of beach - ideal habitat for wildlife particularly on the lower shore where there is less risk of drying out one of the main dangers in this environment. Extreme care and attention is essential when walking across these crevices.



The rock pools contain some exciting "treasures" but beware of jellyfish in the summer months - they can sting!



Moon jelly fish

FAUNA



Due to exposed position vegetation is limited though Sea Campion/Pink Thrift/Tree Mallow (LEFT) can be found.

WILDLIFE - LAND BASED

Birds commonly seen along the cliff tops include - Rock Pipit/Robin/Blackheaded Gulls/Herring Gulls/Shags. Oystercatchers who are totally dependant on the seashore as a foodsource are frequently seen feeding at low tide.

COMPOSITION OF BEACH

The upper beach is approx. 40 metres wide and covered in fine shells deposited by the incoming tide. This is a very popular area for searching for treasures. The beach then changes to fine shingle at the mid-point with rock pools on either side.

The lower beach opens up into a wide expanse of fine traditional sand with further rock pools exposed. This is an ideal situation for beach activities (ie. Surfing/swimming etc)

THE SHORE

The exposed rocky shore have most of their inhabitants swept away with the tides allowing only species such as barnacles and limpets to remain. The variety of species are therefore "zoned" in relation to the tidal height. The following are examples of what you will find.

Mid-Shore

Common Mussels



Lower-Shore

Blue-rayed limpet - usually found inside excavated depressions - invariably found attached to kelp



Sea hare - slow moving creature found amongst seaweed



Dahlia anemone - found in secluded rockpools

It is possible - at low tide - to gain access to Woolcombe and Combesgate Beaches but keen awareness of incoming tides essential.

The South West Coastal Path which runs through Woolacombe/Mortehoe allows access to the spectacular North Devon Coast with a walk out to - and around - Morte Point - being particularly popular.

In summary this is an excellent beach for visitors wishing to seek peace and tranquillity.

Animal & Plant life of Barricane Beach between October 2007-August 2008

Birds

Oystercatcher/Rock Pipit/Robin/Blackheaded Gull/Herring Gulls/Shag

UPPER SHORE

Gut weed	C
Cowries	F
Tusk shells	O
Mermaids Purses	O
Common Mussels	F

MIDSHORE & ROCKPOOLS

Animals

Mermaids Purses	O	Blenny	O
Daisy anemone	R	Prawns	O
Beadlet anemone	F	Limpets	F
Gem anemone	F	Dog Whelks	A
Snakelock Anemone	R	Hermit Crab	O
Strawberry Anemone	F	Spider Crab	O
Purple Topshell	C	Edible Crab	O
Painted Topshell	F	Porcelain Crab	O
Pink Seahare eggs	O	Mussels	SA
Seehares	O	Seahare eggs	O
Rough Periwinkle	C		

Plants

Gutweed	C	Irish Moss	F
Bladderwrack	F	Sea Lettuce	F
Corallina	F	Channelled Wrack	F

LOWER SHORE

Animals

Shrimps	F	Seahare	O
Breadcrumb orange/red sponges	F	Seahare eggs	O
Gem Anemone	C	Sand eel	O
Dahlia Anemone	R	Conger eel	R
Snakelocks anemone	C	Sand shrimp	O
Beadlet anemone	C	Dog whelks	A
Volcano Barnacles	A		
Barnacles	A		
Brown seaweed	A		
Blenny	O		
Moon Jellyfish	O		

Plants

Bladderwrack	F
Corallina	F
Gutweed	F
Kemp	F

SACFOR CODE

S	- Super Abundant
A	- Abundant
C	- Common
F	- Frequent
O	- Occasional
R	- Rare