

## WALK 4 Clwyd

DIFFICULTY RATING ● ● ● ● ●

## SITE GUIDE



Pete Hackett

## Llanddulas

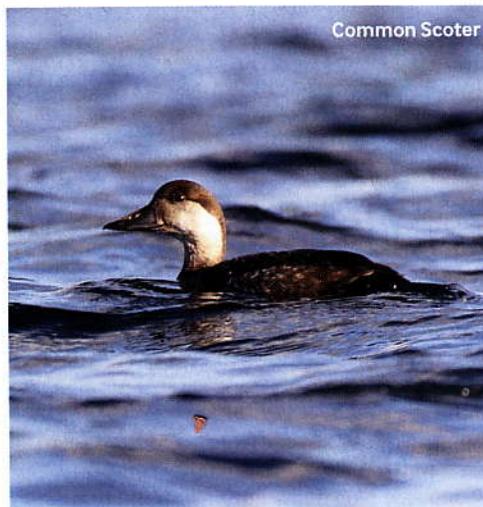
Time to test your scoter ID skills!

This small limestone mining village is an ideal site from which to test your seawatching skills, easily reached from the A55 and with a car park alongside the beach for easy access.

Nestling between the popular holiday destinations of Llandudno and Rhyl, the coastline offers much to the visiting birder. Colwyn Bay holds huge numbers of Common Scoters during the winter months, these being joined by a few handfuls of Velvet Scoter and in recent years three or four Surf Scoters, the males a jewel of a bird with their resplendent mix of orange, white and black.

OK, this is a daunting task, but if you are lucky to own one of the high-end telescopes, the tide is high and viewing conditions suitable there is a chance of adding one of the most difficult 'regular' ducks on the British list. Just viewing the Common Scoter flock is an incredible sight, though, with maybe up to 20,000 birds present in winter.

The area also hosts occasional Long-tailed Duck, Scaup and divers, with Red-throated being by far the most numerous. The beach hosts a few expected coastal waders and

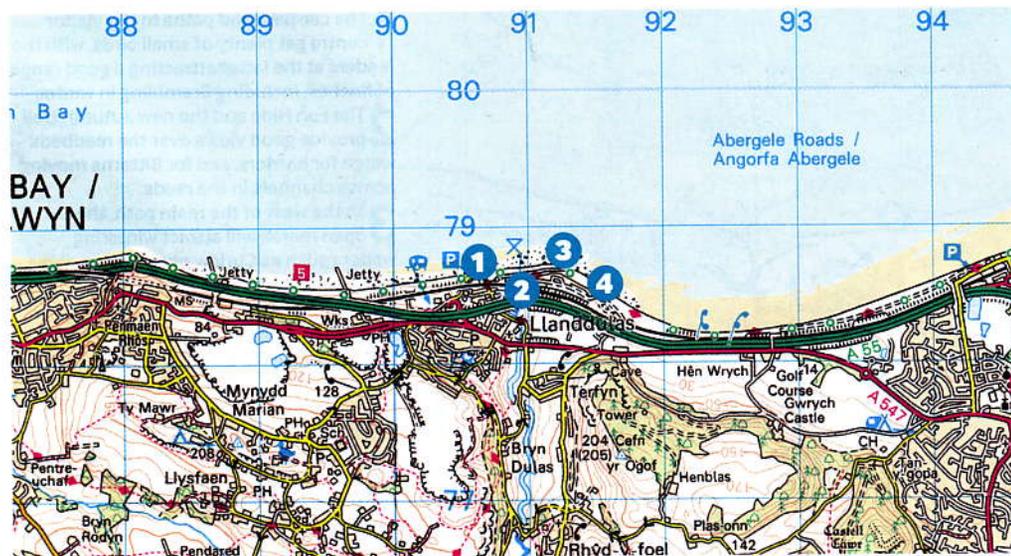


Common Scoter

Pete Hackett

Glaucous, Iceland and Mediterranean Gulls are occasionally present. The bay is now thronged with wind turbines, often controversial, but in this case they at least provide a helping hand when trying to locate the distant birds.

*Pete Hackett*



**Grid ref:** SH 906 786  
**Postcode:** LL22 8HG  
**How to get there:** Lying on the A55 between Old Colwyn and Abergele. From the A55 at Junction 23, take Wern Road and follow to the beach car park on the left.  
**Where to park:** Free parking on the beach car park.  
**Distance and time:** All dependent on how long it takes to get on to target species.  
**Terrain:** The car park is fairly level but with pebbles. The beach has large rocks along.  
**Accessibility:** Open all year round. Suitable for wheelchairs along the coastal path, which is also a cycle path.  
**Facilities:** Plenty of facilities within a short drive. Basic toilets opposite the car park.  
**Public transport:** Arriva bus number 12 Rhyl to Llandudno [arrivabus.co.uk](http://arrivabus.co.uk), nearest rail station Abergele & Pensarn [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)  
**Sites nearby:** *Go Birdings* – Conwy RSPB (March 2004 & March 2006), Great Orme (October 2001), Rhos on Sea.  
**Club contacts:** Clwyd Bird Recording Group [cbrg.org.uk](http://cbrg.org.uk)  
**County recorder:** Ian Spence, [ianspence.cr1@btinternet.com](mailto:ianspence.cr1@btinternet.com)  
**Website:** [northwalesbirding.co.uk](http://northwalesbirding.co.uk), [webirdnorthwales.blogspot.co.uk](http://webirdnorthwales.blogspot.co.uk)  
**Maps:** OS Explorer OL17, OS Landranger 116.

## TOP TIP

Check the weather forecast before setting out – north winds will push seabirds closer inshore.

- 1 Scan out to sea, the large scoter flock is distant. Razorbills and Guillemots may be picked up in flight. Generally closer in are Great Crested Grebes, Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant and Shag. Gannets, terns, Manx Shearwater, skuas and chance of Leach's Petrel after autumn gales.
- 2 The river may hold Grey and Pied Wagtails, Kestrel and common warblers during spring and summer. Good views of martins and Swallows during summer. Large numbers of finches, House Sparrows, Linnets and passage Wheatears, chance of Barn Owl.
- 3 Along the beach check for Turnstone, Ringed Plover, Curlew, Oystercatcher and Rock Pipits. Gulls may be joined by occasional Glaucous, Iceland and Mediterranean. The beach towards Pensarn gives a better chance of Sanderling, while Snow Bunting is a possibility during winter months.