



Lynemouth – Sea coal



What will I see?

Along many beaches on the Northumberland coast, from Lynemouth to Berwick-upon-Tweed, you will see stretches of coal and black carbonaceous shale debris in the sand. They can be quite extensive at Lynemouth beach – particularly “Black beach”.

How old is it?

The coal and shale are Carboniferous – so around 320 million years old, but they have been washed up by recent tide and wave action.

Did you know?

While sea coal may have a wider meaning elsewhere and historically, here in the north east it describes the coal deposited on the beaches and shovelled into horse-drawn carts taken down to the edge of the sea.

Why it is here?

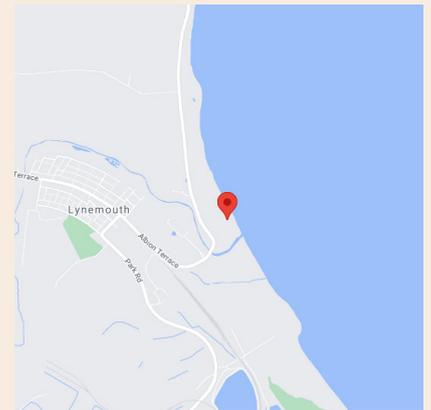
The coal comes mainly from colliery waste which only a few decades ago was being dumped into the sea from coal mines near the coast. Coal is lighter than almost all other rocks and so it separates out and gets deposited last by the tide. The other source of some of the coal could be coastal and undersea outcrops of coal seams.

And wildlife?

Rubbish from a coastal landfill site is being eroded by the sea here. This means it isn't the most picturesque place to watch sea birds and shore birds, which are best watched elsewhere along the coast.

Where is it?

Lynemouth is about 5 kilometres north east of Ashington [NZ305910]



Want to know more?

- NNP Geodiversity Audit
- Onshore GeoIndex
- iGeology
- Geological history of Northumbria
- Try to find the film ‘Seacoal’ a docudrama made in 1985.

