



# Echo Crags



## What will I see?

A dramatic, weathered and worn sandstone escarpment with expansive views over north Northumberland's hills and valleys. As well as the natural rocks with their characteristic holes and hollows there is a small quarry with sedimentary structures showing the origin of the sandstone.

## How old is it?

This set of rocks is part of the Fell Sandstone. They are Carboniferous and around 335 million years old, but the way the rocks look now – their shape and texture as pock-marked crags - is mostly the result of weathering during and after the last glaciation of northern Britain.

## Did you know?

That sandstone rock outcrops like Echo Crags and Great Dour are a very special place for lichens in Northumberland.

## Why it is here?

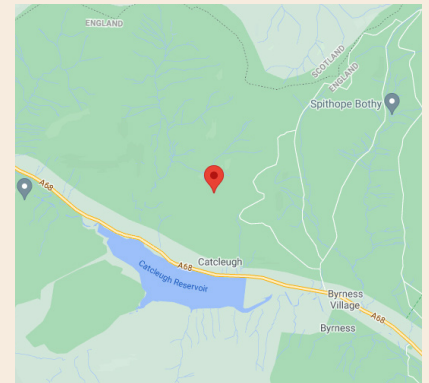
The Fell Sandstones form crags and escarpments in a big arc around the Cheviot hills and across Northumberland. 335 million years ago they were sand and pebbles in a meandering and braided river system flowing across a broad plain.

## And wildlife?

The rock outcrops are notable for their rich upland lichen assemblage, including several species that are common in the Scottish highlands but very rarely found south of the border. The most important of these are *Alectoria sarmentosa*, also known from the Kielder Stone (the English side), and *Platismatia norvegica* at its only confirmed site in England. The *Alectoria* is one of the species that could be a relict of native pine forest, of which a fragment in neighbouring North Tynedale is a possible survival. The crags are set among bilberry and heather.

## Where is it?

Echo Crags is north east of Byrness on the A68 road to Scotland. You can park at Byrness village, but it's a 2 kilometre uphill hike to the Crags. [NT742044].



## Want to know more?

- NNP Geodiversity Audit
- Onshore GeoIndex
- iGeology
- Geological history of Northumbria
- Carboniferous rocks

