

## Exeter – Penzance

*Pass by some of the most picturesque views of the Devon and Cornwall coastline on this route from the former Roman city of Exeter down to the ancient market town of Penzance. Services on this route are operated by First Great Western, Wessex Trains, Virgin Trains and Arriva Trains Wales.*

As you leave Exeter, the line follows the edge of the Exe Estuary. Estuaries are very important places for birds and mammals. As the tide goes out, the mud exposed is full of food, attracting many species of birds, including **ducks, geese** and **swans\***, as well as a range of smaller wading birds. Look out for the elegant **little egret**. These birds are brilliant white, smaller than the more familiar grey heron and have colonized the UK in recent years. Halfway down the river estuary you may see herds of elegant **fallow deer**, easily distinguished from other deer by their fluffy white-undersided tail and palmate (shaped like the palm of your hand) antlers.

All of the West Country is a fantastic place to find **common buzzards**. You can see them either soaring and circling on raised wings or perhaps sitting on posts at the side of the railway.

Whenever you have the sea in full view, watch out for **bottlenose dolphins** and **grey seals** off the coast. Dolphins travel in groups of up to twenty-five and delight people lucky enough to see their playful behaviour.

\*Swan – picture on page 23



© Paul Sterry/NPL

Little egret - Beautiful and distinctive. A welcome addition to the British isles in recent years.



© Colin Carver/NPL

Fallow deer - live in herds and have fur which is reddish-brown and spotted in summer.



© Ernie James/NPL

Common buzzard - A wonderful sight over much of the UK. Listen for their 'mewing' call.



© David Osborn/NPL

Grey seal - grey seal pups are born with pure white fur, evolved in our last ice age.

