

DUNE GRASSLAND

As well as coastal wildlife, Space for Shorebirds has a vital role in conserving the beautiful flower rich dune systems and grasslands that we are so lucky to have here on the Northumberland coast, many of which are of global importance. The dunes also support a huge diversity of insects including some real beauties, like the six-spot burnet moth and dark green fritillary butterfly, as well as bumble bees, hoverflies, beetles and a myriad of other insects.

A worrying feature of some of our dune grassland habitats is pirri pirri bur, an invasive species which has taken hold on many of our dune grasslands at the expense of some of our native dune vegetation.

Iain Robson



Cinnabar Moth on Ragwort



Pyramidal Orchid

Raine Bryant



Pirri Pirri Bur



Common Blue Butterfly on Sweet Vernal Grass

David Feige

Richard Willis

Gavin Duthrie

TWO MEMBERS OF OUR DOG RANGER TEAM



Rosie



Sam



**PROTECTING
THE GLOBALLY
IMPORTANT
BIRDS AND
DUNES OF THE
NORTHUMBERLAND
COAST**

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Image: Gavin Duthrie

SPACE FOR SHOREBIRDS

The Northumberland coast is a truly special place, with long, sandy beaches, dynamic rocky shore and soaring sea cliffs drawing people from far and wide. Our shorebirds share the same opinion. Thousands of birds call the Northumberland coast their home, with most travelling many miles to their summer breeding grounds in the high Arctic.

Space for Shorebirds is the name for Northumberland County Council's coastal wildlife ranger service. Our main aim is to conserve shorebirds along the whole of the Northumberland coast from Seaton Sluice to Berwick-upon-Tweed by reducing the impact of recreational activities upon our nationally and internationally important bird populations.

Rangers are here to talk to members of the public visiting our coast about how we can all make small changes to help protect wildlife here in Northumberland.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Our coastline is busier than ever and one of the main threats our shorebirds face is disturbance. If they can't find enough food during the daylight hours, or cannot rest enough to restore their energy levels, their chances of survival are significantly reduced.

By following the simple guidance below you can enjoy the coast while also protecting it's wildlife.



Pirri Pirri Bur

Staying to the main paths through the dunes will minimise the risk of accidentally trampling on the delicate plants, as well as help to reduce the spread of pirri pirri bur. The spiny sticky burs can quickly become attached to clothing, footwear and dog's fur, so please take time to remove the burs and put them in a rubbish bin to stop this prickly invader from spreading to other areas of the coast.

DOG RANGERS

We understand just how much fun a good run and sniff along the beach is for our dogs. However, dogs have a big part to play in helping our shorebirds.

Dogs of Northumberland – please follow these four simple steps to help us protect coastal wildlife:



Does your dog love the beach but wants to help protect shorebirds too?

We are looking for dogs just like yours to join our team of Dog Rangers! They are an essential part of our service, as they help to spread the message about shorebird conservation and set a brilliant example for other dogs on the beach. If you would like to get involved, please send us a message, and we will feature them on our social media channels! More information about our Dog Rangers can be found on our website.



Images: Gavin Duthrie

COASTAL HABITATS

Northumberland is a very important place for our shorebirds. Most of the land on the Northumberland coast which lies below the high tide mark is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), this is to protect the nationally significant shorebird populations and the vital habitats that they use for feeding and roosting.

Use our handy map to explore these habitats in more detail and discover the wildlife you are likely to encounter in each location!

DUNE GRASSLAND

Sand dunes are a common feature of most beaches in Northumberland. They are dynamic, which means they are constantly shifting and changing shape. They are home to beautiful plants and wildflowers, such as orchids and harebells, which attract thousands of insect species including bumblebees, butterflies and moths.



Iain Robson



Lorraine Dunstford



Northumberland Coast AONB

SANDY BEACH

Northumberland is renowned for its long stretches of golden sandy shores, such as Druridge Bay and Bamburgh Beach. Living buried below the wet sand are juicy worms, and higher up the beach sandhoppers and other insects live amongst the washed up rotting seaweed. All provide a tasty meal for our shorebirds.



Iain Robson

ARCTIC TERN

Identifying feature: black head and bright red bill

When to see: April – August

Where to see: National Trust's Long Nanny Tern site at Beadnell and Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve. Northumberland is at the southern limit of their breeding range, with Beadnell Bay being one of the largest mainland breeding sites for these seabirds in the UK



Kevin Stimpson

LITTLE TERN

Identifying feature: Our smallest tern species. They have a white patch on their face at the base of their bright yellow bills

When to see: April – August

Where to see: National Trust's Long Nanny Tern site at Beadnell and Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve



Tom Cadwallender

SANDERLING

Identifying feature: bright white plumage and rapid feeding action at the shoreline

When to see: all year round, but greater numbers September – March

Where to see: running back and forth at the water's edge on sandy beaches

MUDDY SHORE

Muddy shores are great for our shorebirds – bursting with worms and other marine creatures, the soft sediment means it's easy for birds to probe for food. Mud is a prominent feature of most estuaries, and they are a great place to see so many different birds at the same time and from a safe distance.

ROCKY SHORE

The rocky shore is an extremely important habitat for our shorebirds. Rockpools, boulders, seaweed and crevices, nooks and crannies offer a huge diversity of different food sources and shelter. They are relatively undisturbed and so are a safe haven for not just shorebirds, but seabirds and sometimes seals too.



Richard Willis

OYSTERCATCHER

Identifying feature: black and white plumage and long red bill

When to see: all year round

Where to see: most areas of rocky shore



Tom Cadwallender

RINGED PLOVER

Identifying feature: black 'ring' around the neck and across the eyes

When to see: birds gather in greater numbers outside of the breeding season, but a small population breed on sandy and shingle beaches in Northumberland

Where to see: on muddy shores, such as at Newbiggin and Boulmer



Tom Cadwallender

CURLEW

Identifying feature: long downward curved bill and haunting call

When to see: all year round, but greater numbers September – March

Where to see: most areas of rocky shore, saltmarsh and mud flats



Tom Cadwallender

PURPLE SANDPIPER

Identifying feature: mustard-yellow legs and bill base

When to see: September – March

Where to see: Feeding on the edge of the rocky shore – they are true rocky shore experts! Look for them all along our coast, but Stag Rock to the north of Bamburgh Beach is a stronghold for these waders.



REDSHANK

Identifying feature: bright red shanks (or legs) and bill, as well as their harsh alarm call when disturbed

When to see: all year round, but greater numbers September – March

Where to see: most areas of rocky shore, saltmarsh and mud flats



Northumberland Coast AONB

EIDER DUCK

Identifying feature: striking black and white plumage of male birds

When to see: all year round

Where to see: Most sheltered offshore bays along the coast. Can be seen on their breeding grounds of the Farne Islands and Coquet Island during the summer months



Tom Cadwallender

TURNSTONE

Identifying feature: their feeding technique - it's truly unique to them!

When to see: March (small non-breeding population can be seen all year round)

Where to see: most areas of rocky shore, using their short thick bill to rummage through seaweed and move pebbles to look for small crustaceans and insects.