



Northumbria: From the Tweed to the Tees

National Nature Reserves



Your chance to see nature at its best!

Northumbria has an outstanding variety of wildlife habitats, everything from heather-clad moorland and rare limestone grasslands to windblown sand dunes and coastal wetlands.

The best example of these habitats are protected by National Nature Reserves – some of Britain's finest wildlife sites. As well as safeguarding special places, National Nature Reserves are sites for scientific research, demonstration of good conservation management and give visitors a chance to experience wildlife at first hand.

These are places where you can still find meadows shimmering with butterflies, see carpets of orchids, and hear the wild calls of birds on upland moors, sandy seashores and rocky islands.

Site facilities key



Partial Easy Access



Visitor Centre



Car Park



Picnic Area



Toilets



Cafe & Refreshments



Public Transport



Hides



Dogs Admitted



Leaflets Available



Wheelchair Access



Information Panels



Visiting National Nature Reserves

This leaflet describes some of the Reserves in the Northumbria Area that you are welcome to explore. Several other NNRs in the region that you can visit for quiet enjoyment are shown on the map.

Most of these sites are open all year round, but the seasonal interest varies. Spring is best for woodland flowers and breeding waders and seabirds, spring and summer for grassland flowers and insects. Migrating birds pass through in spring and autumn, while winter brings large numbers of ducks and geese to wetlands.

Many NNRs are run by Natural England but some are managed by other organisations. Wildlife conservation and the peaceful enjoyment of nature are always the goals here, so please follow the Countryside Code. Make sure that you have suitable clothing and footwear and be prepared for changes in weather. Dogs may not be permitted on some sites, especially if there are grazing animals present.

Many of the Reserves have a programme of exciting events or can offer guided walks to organised groups.

We hope you enjoy visiting some of these special places.



© Natural England/John Dunn

Lindisfarne, Northumberland



Dogs welcome – under control (byelaw states on a lead or at heel)
Cafes, picnic area and facilities available in Holy Island Village

On the edge of Britain, land and water meet. Shifting sands and tides combine to create the dunes, saltmarsh and mudflats of the Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve, home to a fascinating variety of wildlife. The Reserve protects a long stretch of coast, including the dunes around historic Holy Island. This landscape has been moulded through time by man and nature to create a unique and spectacular habitat for you to discover.

Several nationally important plants grow in the sand dunes, including 11 species of orchid, among them the Lindisfarne helleborine which is found nowhere else. The abundance of flowering plants provides a valuable food source for moths, butterflies and other insects.

Lindisfarne is a birdwatcher's paradise throughout the year. Migrant birds stop over in spring and autumn, and in winter the Reserve is home to the largest gathering of wildfowl and wading birds in the north-east.

A 5 km trail around some of the finest parts of the Reserve allows visitors to discover the Island's unique world of flowers, wildfowl and wading birds.

During your walk visit the Window on Wild Lindisfarne, located on the path to Lindisfarne Castle. The building provides an unique perspective of the rich wildlife and habitats which can be found on your way to the Castle. Displays tell the story of how the community, along with Natural England, protects Lindisfarne's natural gems.

To obtain a panoramic view of the island, visit the Lookout on Wild Lindisfarne, a familiar landmark perched above the village high on the top of the Heugh. The building was originally a 1940s coastguard lookout but has been transformed into an observation point offering spectacular views over the whole island.

Location and access

Site location: Holy Island is situated south of Berwick-Upon-Tweed and is signposted from the A1.

The Island can only be reached at low tide across a long causeway. Before crossing you must check the tide timetables on the causeway's notice board.

Grid Reference: NU 090430

Telephone: 01289 381470

Natural England:

www.gov.uk/natural-england

Visit the Lindisfarne NNR Blog:

<http://lindisfarnennr.blogspot.co.uk/>

Farne Islands, Northumberland



The Reserve is a group of islands lying approximately 5 km off the coast of Northumberland. The Farnes are a National Nature Reserve run by The National Trust. These islands are a renowned seabird breeding site and a fantastic place to see puffins and get close to nesting terns. In spring and summer, Sandwich terns, Arctic terns and common terns all nest in densely packed colonies, while kittiwakes, guillemots and razorbills crowd on the cliffs. The Farne Islands are also home to large numbers of grey seals.

Although the Farnes can be enjoyed all year, the best time to visit for seabirds is between mid-April and early August. Access is by boat from Seahouses harbour.

Location and access

Site location: North Sea, off the Northumberland Coast between Bamburgh and Seahouses and 10 km south-east of Lindisfarne (also an NNR).

Ordnance Survey maps: Landranger 75
Explorer 340

Telephone: 01665 720651

National Trust: www.nationaltrust.org.uk



A spectacular undersea landscape

Natural England is responsible for advising Government and industry on marine conservation and seascape issues in England's territorial waters. Hidden beneath the waves of the North Sea are amazing cliffs, seaweed forests, submerged sand banks, and undersea reefs – all teeming with colourful marine life. The richness of the sea attracts breeding birds to the coast and offshore islands of North East England. The birds rely on the healthy North Sea for food, such as sandeels, to feed their chicks. These seabird cities are a popular visitor attraction, and are important for both the wildlife and the economy of the region.



© Natural England/Paul Glendell

Snow on sphagnum

Kielder Head & Kielder Mires, Northumberland



The Kielder Head and Kielder Mires NNRs cover a large area of moorland in Northumberland. Blanket Bog – with bog mires, heather and cottongrass – now covers much of the area, but in a few sheltered cleughs (small valleys) the traces of a former woodland of downy birch and rowan can be found. Breeding birds of the area include golden plovers, dunlins, lapwings, oystercatchers, curlews, dippers, common sandpipers, ring ouzels and wheatears.

The NNR is part of Kielder Forest Park and there is a Forestry Commission visitor centre at Kielder Castle (in Kielder village). The Castle is the starting point for a number of walks and trails exploring the area.

Location and access

Site location: The NNR is part of the Kielder Forest Park, 4 km north-east of Kielder village.

Grid Reference: NY632934

Telephone: 01434 250209

Forestry Commission: www.forestry.gov.uk

Whitelee Moor, Northumberland

P

Whitelee Moor is special because it is an area of active blanket bog, with heather heaths and other habitats of national and international importance. The River Rede and its tributaries add to the habitat variety. Birds that breed here include merlin and stonechat. Other birds of the area include black grouse, skylarks, dunlins, curlews, golden plovers, grey wagtails, dippers and ring ouzels. Otters often hunt along the Rede and a herd of feral goats roams the area. A network of footpaths cross the Reserve but visitors should have hill-walking

experience if attempting long walks. The area is remote and wild, and the weather can change quickly. The site is managed by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

Location and access

Site location: The Reserve is located at the head of Redesdale, south of the A68 Newcastle to Jedburgh road where it crosses the Scottish Border at Carter Bar.

Grid Reference: NT 700040

Telephone: 0191 284 6884

Northumberland Wildlife Trust:

www.nwt.org.uk



Castle Eden Dene, County Durham



Enter a magical woodland world where yew, oak and ash create a home for wildlife. The Dene provides a sheltered haven for an incredible variety of birds, fungi, plants and butterflies. 10,000 years of wild growth in a deep gorge has created a place you can explore again and again.

Castle Eden Dene, with its mysterious atmosphere, has fascinated people for hundreds of years. The Reserve covers 221 hectares of woodland and lowland grassland, where post-glacial melt waters carved out spectacular limestone cliffs and gorges.

The Dene is the largest area of semi-natural woodland in north-east England. The tangled landscape is a survivor of the wildwood that once covered most of Britain.

There are two marked walks around the Reserve. Walk 1 is 3.5 km, and takes between 2–2.5 hours. Walk 2 is 3 km, and takes between 1–2 hours to complete.

Location and access

Site location: Off the A19 on the outskirts of Peterlee in County Durham

Grid Reference NZ 427406

Telephone: 0191 5860004

Natural England:

www.gov.uk/natural-england



Woodland at Castle Eden Dene NNR

© Natural England/Charlie Hedley

Walking with Natural England

Castle Eden Dene NNR is a great place for a healthy walk in a lovely woodland setting. Why not join one of the organised walks? The walks are suitable for beginners and advanced walkers. For more information contact the NNR office on 0191 586 0004. Hundreds of similar organised walks take place in the North East as part of the national walk 4 life initiative. Did you know that Natural England also helps fund England's National Trails, including the Pennine Way, Cleveland Way and Hadrian's Wall Path?

Thrislington, County Durham



The area is famed for its magnesian limestone which was laid down in shallow tropical seas over 250 million years ago. An unusual type of grassland, special for its rare wild flowers and numerous butterflies, has formed on the limestone. The limestone grassland at the site supports scarce plant species, including blue moor grass, small scabious, rock-rose, and dark red helleborine. Insects abound with many unusual species present, including northern brown argus butterfly and glow-worm. A viewing platform and information panels help visitors to see the site's remarkable variety of plants and insects.

The best time to visit is between May and late August. Thrislington National Nature Reserve is jointly managed by Lafarge Aggregates and Natural England. The nearest refreshment and toilet facilities are in nearby local towns and villages.

Location and access

Site location: Thrislington NNR is close to the A1(M) and situated 1 km east of Ferryhill, which is 10 km south of Durham and 12 km north-east of Bishop Auckland.

Grid Reference: NZ 309325

Telephone: 0191 5860004

Natural England:

www.gov.uk/natural-england

Moor House – Upper Teesdale, County Durham



The Pennine hills form the backbone of England, and at this upland Reserve you can explore a stunning landscape of superb panoramic views, spectacular waterfalls and rare rock formations.

The Reserve includes an almost complete range of upland habitats typical of the North Pennines, from lower lying hay meadows, rough grazing and juniper wood to limestone grassland, blanket bogs and summit heaths of the high fells. Nowhere else in Britain is there such a diversity of rare habitats in one location.

In spring and summer, the area comes alive with the calls of ground nesting birds, including curlews, redshanks, oystercatchers and lapwings. This is now one of the most important areas in England for these birds. Red and black grouse can also be seen here.

Many walks can be made around the NNR using the Public Rights of Way network. A nature trail (5km) begins at Cow Green

Location and access

Site location: The site is situated in the heart of the North Pennines. It is in two parts either side of Cow Green reservoir.

Grid Reference: NY 811309

Telephone: 01833 622374

Natural England:

www.gov.uk/natural-england



© Natural England/Martin Furness

The Pennine Way alongside the River Tees between Widdybank Farm and Cauldron Snout

reservoir car park. The weather can change quickly in this part of the world, so please come prepared.

Northern uplands are special

The North East's uplands are very important for wildlife. Almost all of England's black grouse are now found in the North Pennines, along with the largest stand of juniper in England and some of the country's finest remaining hay meadows. As well as managing the Moor House – Upper Teesdale NNR, Natural England works closely with farmers and landowners throughout the uplands of the region to help keep these places special for wildlife and people. Natural England is the Government's statutory advisor on landscape, with specific responsibilities for National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts.



Teesmouth, Tees Valley



Situated on the Tees Estuary near Middlesbrough, Teesmouth NNR has a range of wildlife habitats, including intertidal sand and mud flats, sand dunes and saltmarsh.

The Reserve is in two parts around Seal Sands and the North Gare. North Gare is an area of dunes and marsh on the north bank of the Seaton Channel, while Seal Sands is an area of sand and mud flats.

Teesmouth has a large and varied bird population and Seal Sands supports the only regular breeding colony of common seals on the north-east coast of England. The Reserve can be enjoyed at any time of year. Summer is best for dune flowers and seabirds; migrant birds pass through in spring and autumn; and in winter thousands of wildfowl and waders arrive on the estuary. Seals are present throughout the year. Although not part of the NNR, the RSPB Saltholme Reserve is nearby and has birdwatching hides, a visitor centre, shop and café.

Location and access

Site location: mid-way between Hartlepool and Redcar, approximately 5 km to the north-east of Middlesbrough.

Grid Reference: NZ 540280

Telephone: 01429 853325

Natural England:

www.gov.uk/natural-england

Surprising places to watch wildlife

Teesmouth is an unusual and surprising reserve in offering excellent wildlife-watching opportunities in an industrial setting.



For further information please contact:

Email: northumbria.communications@naturalengland.org.uk

Front cover photographs:

Moorland near Middleton-in-Teesdale © Martin Furness



Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

ISBN 978-1-84754-134-8

Catalogue Code: NE168

Natural England publications are available as accessible pdfs from:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information:

0845 600 3078 or email

enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Printed on Defra Silk comprising 75% recycled fibre.

www.gov.uk/natural-england

This publication is published by Natural England under the Open Government Licence v3.0 for public sector information. You are encouraged to use, and reuse, information subject to certain conditions.

For details of the licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

Natural England photographs are only available for non-commercial purposes. If any other information, such as maps or data, cannot be used commercially this will be made clear within the publication.

© **Natural England 2015**