

# Exe Estuary Wildlife Refuges



Exmouth wildlife refuge: **now in effect 15/09 – 31/12**

Dawlish Warren wildlife refuge: **applies all year**

## Wildlife Refuges

The intertidal areas off **Exmouth** (Duck Pond) and to the north of **Dawlish Warren** are particularly vital for protected birds. These areas are known as wildlife refuges, indicated with yellow buoys which have WR in black lettering. All users are asked to avoid the refuges when safe to do so, at all tidal states.

## Site of Special Scientific Interest

The Exe Estuary is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar (wetland of international importance) site. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in a SSSI or to damage or disturb land within a SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct a SSSI notice or sign. These offences carry a fine of up to £20,000.

# Cockwood Steps

## Exe Estuary navigation byelaws

Check for information at the access points and adhere to the navigation byelaws (Max penalty £1,000):

- Byelaw 4: Do not exceed speed limit as defined by charts and buoyage: 10 Knots max.
- Byelaw 4a: Power boat area: powerboating allowed in marked area when predicted tidal height is 3.8m or more.
- Byelaw 5: Skiing only allowed in ski area marked by yellow buoys.
- Byelaw 6: Navigate with due care and attention and with reasonable care for others.

## Wildlife Refuge

The intertidal areas off **Exmouth** (Duck Pond) and to the north of **Dawlish Warren** are particularly vital for protected birds. These areas are known as wildlife refuges, indicated with special mark buoys and smaller yellow marker buoys with "WR" in black lettering.

All users are asked to avoid the refuges when safe to do so, at all tidal states.

**Exmouth Refuge:** in place from **15 Sept - 31st December** each year.

**Dawlish Warren Refuge:** applies all year round.

## Site of Special Scientific Interest

The Exe Estuary is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar (wetland of international importance) site. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in a SSSI or to damage or disturb land within a SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct a SSSI notice or sign. These offences carry a fine of up to £20,000.



10 knots speed limit



Powerboating in marked areas



Skiing in marked areas



Adhere to the codes of conduct



Respect other users



Avoid Wildlife Refuges

Codes of conduct for the Exe Estuary and many of the activities to be enjoyed on the Exe are available from local libraries and online at [www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk](http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk) or [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org)



# The Exe Estuary

Welcome to the spectacular Exe Estuary, internationally important for the wildlife it supports.

As well as being an ideal site for a wide range of recreational activities, the Exe Estuary is also home to an abundance of wildlife.

From August until the following March each year, tens of thousands of birds flock here to feed, rest and breed. On their extraordinary, exhausting migratory journeys from as far away as arctic Siberia, these birds face many challenges and are on the margins of survival. Please help us protect them by avoiding feeding and roosting areas on the shoreline, as they use up precious energy reserves if they are routinely disturbed, which can affect their survival.

The mud flats, mussel and eelgrass beds also provide rich feeding grounds. A cubic metre of estuary mud contains the same amount of energy as 16 Mars bars - a big reason it attracts fabulous birds such as Avocet, Bar-tailed Godwits and Ouzle.

## Wildlife Refuge

The intertidal areas off Exmouth (Duck Pond) and to the north of Dawlish Warren have been identified as being particularly vital for protected birds. These areas are known as wildlife refuges.

All users are asked to avoid the refuges when safe to do so, at all tidal states. The Exmouth refuge is in place from 15 Sept - 31st March each year, whilst the Dawlish Warren refuge is in place all year round.

## Exe Estuary navigation byelaws

Check for information at the access points and adhere to the navigation byelaws (max penalty £1,000):

- Byelaw 4: Do not exceed speed limit as defined by charts and buoyage: 10 Knots max.
- Byelaw 4a: Power boat area: powerboating allowed in marked area when predicted tidal height is 3.8m or more.
- Byelaw 5: Skiing only allowed in ski area marked by yellow buoys.
- Byelaw 6: Navigate with due care and attention and with reasonable care for others.

## Species Information



### Dark-bellied Bront Goose & Oystercatcher

Thousands of waders and wildfowl like Oystercatcher and Bront Goose breed in the far North but winter on the Exe.



### Eelgrass

This is the main source of food for many overwintering birds but can also provide a refuge for Seahorses and young fish. It grows underwater but can survive being routinely dried out at low tide.



### Osprey

Seen briefly in spring on their way to breed in Northern England and Scotland, fish-catching birds can also be seen in autumn when they return to West Africa.



### Dunlin

Flocking together in large numbers when feeding helps to keep watch for top speed predators like the Peregrine Falcon. When pursued in flight, the flock can fly in formation to confuse their hunters.



### Avocet

These beautiful birds were on the brink in the UK during the mid-1900s but recolonised the beaches of East Anglia which were closed during WW2. Their long, upturned beaks sift their food (invertebrates) from the water.



## Site of Special Scientific Interest

The Exe Estuary is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar (wetland of international importance) site. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in a SSSI or to damage or disturb land within a SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct a SSSI notice or sign. These offences carry a fine of up to £20,000.

Codes of conduct for the Exe Estuary and many of the activities to be enjoyed on the Exe are available from local libraries and online at [www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk](http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk) or [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org)



# Dawlish Warren

## NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Welcome to beautiful Dawlish Warren. This precious coastal National Nature Reserve is one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe. The dunes, beach and mudflat habitats are all specially protected.

It's not just home to rare flora with a carpet of tiny flowers. In spring and summer, Warren Point is particularly important for birds. Throughout the year birds feed, rest and breed here. From late summer until the following spring, thousands of migratory wading birds and wildfowl that winter on the Exe Estuary, rely on the Warren's shores as the main resting place in the hours close to high tide.

Please help us protect these birds and avoid roosting areas on the shoreline. Birds can use up precious energy reserves if they are disturbed and this can affect their survival.

Everything you need to know is explained in the Dawlish Warren code of conduct, which you can find at the Visitor Centre and online at [www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk](http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk) or [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org).

### Wildlife Refuge

Dawlish Warren has been identified as one of two areas on the estuary that are particularly vital for protected birds. These areas are known as wildlife refuges. In winter, thousands of birds rest and feed on the mudflats and eelgrass beds of the Warren, during their long migratory journeys.

All users are asked to avoid the wildlife refuge where safe to do so, all year round at all tidal stages, due to its importance as a high tide resting area.

Please note there is an existing byelaw in place for statutory exclusion of dogs east of groyne 9, at Warren Point and in the refuge area.

### Warren Point

All visitors are asked to avoid the beach past groyne 9 for approximately three hours either side of high tide on certain days during September to March (check on-site signage). In summer, from 1 April to 31 August, this area can be fished at any time.



No dogs between lifeguard tower and groyne 3  
1 April to 30 September

No dogs beyond groyne 9

Golf Course  
No public access

Bird hide

Landing zone  
1 April - 4 Sept only

Resort Area

Lifeguard tower

Visitor Centre

Greenland Lake

Wildlife Refuge

Warren Point

Wreck

Codwood Steps

### Species Information

**Dark-billed Brent Goose & Oystercatcher**  
Thousands of waders & wildfowl like Oystercatcher and Brent Goose breed in the far north bit wider on the sea.

**Marsh Helleborine & Southern Marsh Orchid**  
Colourful Southern Marsh Orchid and Marsh Helleborine are found in damp meadow (this area) from May to July.

**Autumn Lady's-tresses & Sand Crocus**  
Sand Crocus and Autumn Lady's-tresses are species of the grassland. Sand for Waders) crocus. Flowers from March to late April. Autumn Lady's-tresses are numerous from August.

**Sea Bindweed, Marram grass & Sand Lizard**  
Sea Bindweed, Marram grass and Sand Lizards are found in areas of middle dunes. Marram grass plays a vital part in building the dunes that make Dawlish Warren so special. Sand Lizards can be seen basking from as early as March.

**Sandwich Tern & Common Scoter**  
Sandwich Terns are summer visitors that winter around the coast of Africa, with numbers building in July and August while Common Scoters can be seen in groups collecting offshore throughout the year.

**Wasp Spiders & Great Green Bush-crickets**  
The Warren is home to spectacular invertebrates like Wasp Spiders and Great Green Bush-crickets.

- No BBQs or fires
- Don't pick flowers or collect driftwood
- No drones
- No camping
- No cycling
- No launching/landing of watercraft
- Don't dig up plants
- Metal detecting only on beach
- Bag it and bin it

**Site of Special Scientific Interest**  
The Warren is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and forms part of the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in a SSSI or to damage or disturb land known to be an SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct a SSSI notice or sign. These offences carry a fine of up to £20,000.

Codes of conduct for Dawlish Warren and many of the activities to be enjoyed on the Exe are available from the Visitor Centre, local libraries and online at [www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk](http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk) or [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org)