



Sand dunes at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR.
Paul Glendell/English Nature 24,178

Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes stretches for some 8 km along the north-east coast of Lincolnshire. The constantly changing habitats, shaped by the wind and the sea, are home to a wealth of plants, birds and insects. The national and international importance of this coastline has been recognised by English Nature through the creation of this National Nature Reserve.

The sand here is very fine and is readily blown off the beach onto the land, where it is tamed by specialised plants like marram grass, and dunes begin to form. Once the dunes are stable, other plants can become established, including birds foot trefoil, fairy flax, viper's bugloss,

The secret of the sand hills

In the 1930s the site was purchased by the Air Ministry for use as a bombing range, and the beach was littered with old Second World War tank traps and pillboxes were built and the dunes were mined to defend against invasion. In 1969 part of the site was handed over to the Nature Conservancy and declared a National Nature Reserve, although bombing continued until 1973 when the range was finally moved to Donna Nook.

The sand dunes that we see today first began to form in the 13th century after some unusually big storms. The sea threw up shingle and other beach building material and strong winds blew sand to the back of the beach. The same coastal processes are still at work today creating new shingle ridges, dunes and saltmarsh.

Beaches and bombs

Enjoy the fascinating wildlife and variety of rare habitats on this coastal reserve of international importance

Saltfleetby Theddlethorpe Dunes
National Nature Reserve

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Migrant hawkler. Geoff Trinder

The formation of dunes has held water on parts of the reserve which have become freshwater marsh. Very different to the dry dunes, the marsh is home to water loving plants like yellow iris, meadow sweet and cuckoo flower, and in some years a stunning display of orchids. It is here in the pools that the

The bog beasts

The prickly sea buckthorn that covers much of the dunes is an important plant along this coastline. It provides safe cover and nesting sites for a variety of birds including resident dunlocks and wrens as well as summer visitors such as whitethroats and willow warblers. In the autumn and winter, berries from sea buckthorn, hawthorn and elder provide a feast for thrushes like the fieldfare and redwing, which visit from Scandinavia.



Whitethroat on sea buckthorn. Julian Smith

ladies bedstraw and pyramidal orchid. These strangely named plants support an array of insects including several bees and butterflies. Smaller insects are hunted by the dragonflies and robber flies that patrol the dunes.

English Nature manages the reserve in partnership with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Ministry of Defence. Traditional farm practices such as haymaking and grazing maintain the flower rich meadows, dune grassland and freshwater marsh, while the sea scrub on a long-term rotation.

Management

Washed by the tides, the sand, mud and saltmarsh at the north of the reserve provide food and refuge for the many birds that visit our shores in the winter, from their arctic breeding grounds. Ringed plover and shelduck found at the edge of the sea, curlew probe the mud for lugworms, Brent geese graze the saltmarsh grass, while flocks of twite and snow bunting eat the seeds of the sumpire and other saltmarsh plants.

The sea's bounty

dragonflies and damselflies breed, the water spider nests and the leech lurks. It is also important habitat for the increasingly scarce water vole.



Ringed plover. Bill Moorcroft



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Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes is one of more than 200 National Nature Reserves in England. Such places are among the best wildlife and earth heritage sites in the country and many are important in an international context. English Nature is the government agency which looks after our natural heritage. We promote the conservation of wildlife and natural features through advice, research, and grants. We encourage people to become actively involved in nature conservation and welcome voluntary help on National Nature Reserves.

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Bottom left: Wheelchair user on special access boardwalk. Paul Glendell/English Nature 24,143
Main: Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR. Peter Wakely/English Nature 16,397



working today
for nature tomorrow



Summer



Water vole.



Viper's bugloss. Geoff Trinder



Green hairstreak. R.H.M. Harvey



Natterjack toad Bufo calamita. Silvestris/FLPSA.

Winter



Fieldfare. P.N. Watts/English Nature 25,232



Sea buckthorn berries.



Shelduck. Bill Moorcroft

Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes National Nature Reserve



Be aware

- Danger deep creeks, soft mud and the risk of being cut off by the tide, take extra care in foggy conditions.
- Part of the foreshore is used by the Ministry of Defence for demolition and care should be taken when the warning flags are displayed. Be aware of unexploded munitions.
- For your own safety and for the benefit of wildlife keep to marked paths and keep dogs on a lead or under close control. Paths may be slippery or have uneven surfaces.

Key

SSSI boundary	Easy Access Trail
Public Footpath	Parking
Path	

Access

The reserve can be accessed from seven car parks (shown on the map) located a short distance from the A1031 between Saltfleet and Mablethorpe.

There is a public footpath running along the landward edge of most of the reserve and a path between the dunes and the saltmarsh. In addition to these there are the circular walks and the easy access trail detailed below.

There are Bus services Mon to Sat from Grimsby stopping at Saltfleet and from Louth and Mablethorpe stopping at Theddlethorpe and Saltfleetby.

Sea View trails

There are three circular walks from this car park that take you through meadow, dune and saltmarsh. They range from 30 mins to 1hr 30 mins.

Churchill Lane trails

There are two circular walks from this car park that take you through the freshwater marsh and dunes. They range from 30 to 50 mins.

Rimac – easy access trail

There is wheelchair/pushchair access to the reserve from the Rimac car park. The bridge to this car park has a weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes. Toilets are available from May to October.

The track straight on from the entrance takes you to the saltmarsh-viewing platform (500 metres) or you can turn right onto the figure of eight trail (850 metres) to visit the ponds and freshwater marsh. Information panels are situated at various points along the trail. A self-propelled wheelchair and audio guides are available on request.



Easy Access trail

Reserve events

English Nature run a range of free guided walks and activities from May to September each year.

For further information on the reserve, the events, self-guided trail leaflets or for volunteer opportunities either contact the reserve office on:

01507 338611

or see our website:

www.english-nature.org.uk