

Welcome to Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve

Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve is an area of sand dunes, mudflats and beach that lies at the mouth of the River Exe.

Internationally important for rare species and habitats found here, the Reserve is designated and legally protected as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** and a **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**. It also forms a key part of the **Exe estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)** and **Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site)**.

Plants, invertebrates and birds provide year-round interest for visitors to a site which also provides a holiday resort enjoyed by some 500,000 people a year. The reserve is owned jointly by Teignbridge District Council who provide the Ranger Service, Visitor Centre and manage the public parts of the site, and the Devon Wildlife Trust, which own the golf course and mudflats, to which there is no public access.

Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve

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Enjoy your visit!

If you need this information in a different format please call
01626 361101



Dawlish Warren

National Nature Reserve



green spaces

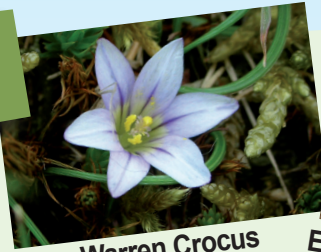
Teignbridge
DISTRICT COUNCIL
South Devon

Through the seasons at Dawlish Warren

Spring

Miniature Marvels

In Spring look out for some of Dawlish Warren's rarest, and tiniest, wildlife. In late March look for Sand (or Warren) Crocus, Early Forget-Me-Not and Upright Chickweed in the short dune grasslands. While smaller still, the tiny, but internationally rare, Petalwort can be found in some dune slacks, but you will need a hand lens and luck!



Warren Crocus



Early Forget-Me-Not

New Arrivals

A time for arrivals, departures and those just visiting. Wading birds and wildfowl will depart, heading north during March, but Wheatears, Chiffchaffs, Common Whitethroat and terns will arrive, either on their way to breeding grounds elsewhere or to summer at the Warren.



Common Whitethroat

Just Awake

Warmer days will see the emergence of both Common Lizard and the rarer Sand Lizard which can be seen from as early as late February. Butterflies like Small Copper or Small Tortoiseshell take to the wing in April adding colour to the grasslands.



Sand Lizard

Autumn

Amazing Journeys

Autumn marks the start of some incredible journeys as birds move from breeding to wintering grounds. Some, such as Arctic Terns move from one end of the earth to the other each spring and autumn, others have come from above the Arctic Circle and are looking for somewhere warmer to spend the winter be that at the Warren or further south.



Dunlin



Whimbrel



Ringed Plover

In September look for Curlew Sandpipers or Little Stints at high tide alongside other wading birds like Dunlin, Ringed and Grey Plover, Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit which are likely to spend the whole winter here. A passing Osprey will cause excitement for birds and birders alike: watch and listen for large numbers of birds taking to the air at once. Remember autumn bird watching can be confusing, with birds in breeding plumage, wintering plumage, somewhere in between and youngsters all together!



Red Admiral

Late Colour & Surprises

Late season butterflies like Red Admiral and Peacock can be seen surprisingly late into the year, before they look for somewhere to hibernate. Autumn Lady's Tresses, a small orchid whose white flowers spiral around a central spike, are common during September in the dune grasslands.

Migration time for birds can lead to surprise finds of rare birds, so with luck a really unusual bird could be about, so expect the unexpected!



Pelican's Foot Shell



Tower Shell

Beach Wrecks

Winter storms can result in 'wrecks' of Starfish, Mermaids Purses, Cuttlefish, Sea Mice, Heart Urchins and a range of shells like Pelican's Foot, Common, Netted and Dog Whelk, Otter Shells, and Scallops. The egg mass of Common Whelk is a common find along the foreshore.



Sanderling



Redshank

Eco Mowers

Helping to keep the grasslands in shape, Dartmoor ponies are used in the winter months to help produce ideal conditions for rare flowers and invertebrates. These are 'working', wild animals, so DO NOT feed them or try to stroke them.



Dartmoor pony

Summer

Common Centaury



Rainbow Palette

Dawlish Warren has recorded over 600 species of plant, some, such as Southern Marsh Orchid, Marsh Helleborine, Sea Bindweed and Evening Primrose, are hard to miss while others need a keener eye, such as Lesser Centaury or Strawberry Clover.



Marsh Helleborine

Songs and Sounds

Listen out for hard-to-see species, like Reed Warbler, Little Grebe around the pond, Chiffchaff or the beautiful Blackcap song in the woods, while Common Whitethroat will sing from patches of scrub. From July the harsh tones of Sandwich Terns or more tuneful calls of Whimbrel or Curlew may draw your attention.



Sandwich Tern

Great Green Bush Cricket



Legs & Co

Striking invertebrates such as Tiger Moths, Great Green Bush Crickets, Wasp Spiders and Dragon and Damselflies bring colour while Sand Wasps can be seen hunting or carrying prey if you are lucky.



Wasp Spider

Winter



Brent Geese

Wigeon

Mud Walkers

In winter flocks of wading birds and wildfowl increase with thousands of birds such as Dunlin, Oystercatchers, Wigeon, Teal and Brent Geese to be seen, particularly in a period of 2 to 3 hours either side of high water. These birds are joined by smaller numbers of Sanderling and Turnstone around the Warren's shores, while out to sea or in the estuary look for Grebes, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser and Divers.



Oystercatchers, Bottlenose Dolphin, Gannet, Stonechat, Groundhopper, Marram grass

Bottlenose Dolphin

Formation and History

Made of estuary sediments and sand, the Warren has been in existence for 7,000 years. Its shape and form has changed repeatedly under the influence of storms, currents and available sediment, with periods of erosion and rebuilding (accretion) occurring.

These changes have, at times, produced tidal creeks and islands as well as the sand spit we see today. There is evidence that a civil war fort existed here, as well as houses that were used until the 1930s, on parts of Warren Point that have since been lost to the sea.

Dune systems are, by their nature, dynamic and the Warren we know today is likely to continue to evolve in the years to come.

