

Sites of wildlife interest



Key to all site maps on following pages

-  Public paths/sculpture
-  Open space
-  Restricted open space
-  Woodland
-  Urban/industrial areas
-  Agricultural areas
-  Beach
-  Rocky shoreline

4 River Don Saltmarsh



Inter-tidal mudflat is one of the most biologically-productive habitats on earth, being matched only by tropical rainforest. The mouth of the Don still has a remnant of this precious resource, and it offers views of the varied wading birds that feed there.

As recently as the 1970s Jarrow Slake was the most important area of inter-tidal mudflat between Teesmouth and Holy Island. Since then 100 acres have been lost to landfill, but the remaining strip along the Don still provides an important wildlife site.

Just above the high tide line there is salt marsh vegetation with regionally rare plants like sea spurrey, scurvy grass (so named because sailors used it as a source of vitamin C to combat disease) and sea aster, with its showy daisy-like flower heads.

Most visitors however are attracted by the bird life that feeds at low tide in the glistening mud which teems with marine molluscs, worms and crustaceans. Conspicuous is the redshank, or 'sentinel of the marshes', whose musical yelping cry acts as a warning of approaching danger to other birds. Curlew, lapwing, dunlin, ringed plover and sandpipers are also often seen, together with teal, grey wagtail and kingfisher further upstream.



ACCESS
There is a level dolomite/earth path alongside the site. Binoculars are essential to get a good view of the birds without disturbing them. The River Don Path starts here.

TRANSPORT
There is a regular bus service along Church Bank (nos 526 and 527).