



Issue 66 Autumn/Winter

# Exe Press

2023



Newsletter of the Exe Estuary Partnership

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**Roman Navigation of the Exe**

Make the Most of Winter Waders

**Plastic Free with The Exmouth Cup**

Salmon Run



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FOR THE LATEST ESTUARY-WIDE INFORMATION,  
NEWS AND EVENTS PLEASE VISIT [WWW.EXE-ESTUARY.ORG](http://WWW.EXE-ESTUARY.ORG)



Image Credit: Nick D'Agorne.



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## EXE STAKEHOLDER FORUM 2023

On the evening of 6th September, the Exe Stakeholder Forum took place in the beautiful Music Room of Powderham Castle. Chaired by Ted Draper (Forum Chair), with Gordon Betteridge as Forum Vice Chair, the free event invited local people to hear about management of the estuary, and have their views heard through Q&A sessions, workshop discussions and one-to-one discussions with speakers.



Topics covered the Exe Sedimentation Project, Exeter Port Authority update, and the Dawlish Warren Beach Management Post-Scheme Review. The Priorities Workshop offered attendees the opportunity to identify and rank Exe Estuary Partnership priority actions and compare these with the management activities being carried out in the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The evening ended with a performative presentation about the Festival of the Exe and the Salmon Run

Thank you to the 70 people who attended on the night to contribute to discussions. Feedback was overall incredibly positive, with a full feedback report available alongside presentations on our website at [www.exe-estuary.org/get-involved/forum](http://www.exe-estuary.org/get-involved/forum).

The outcomes of the Priorities Workshop indicated water quality to be a priority topic for the Exe Partnership. In response, this will be the leading theme of the Winter Forum taking place on the **6th February 2024**. For this event, we hope to hear from a variety of water quality monitoring and regulatory organisations,

If you are not already on our mailing list for future Forum events, please contact [exeestua@devon.gov.uk](mailto:exeestua@devon.gov.uk)

## THE EXE ZEROS IN ON NET ZERO

From the sandy shoreline of Exmouth all the way up to the historic quayside in the heart of the city, the Exeter Port Authority (EPA) manages the waterways of the Exe Estuary and the Exeter ship canal. EPA, which is part of the Exeter City Council, has ambitious plans to become net zero by the year 2030. These plans include EPA operations in and around the port.

EPA has appointed Moffatt & Nichol, a maritime and coastal engineering firm based in Exeter, to assist in the development of a strategy to both decarbonise operations and to understand what may be required to support Exeter's vibrant boating and water sports community in moving towards low carbon fuels, as these become more common place and in line with UK government commitment for net zero by 2050.

The study team will be contacting port users over the course of the next few months in order to conduct a survey that will contribute to the development of an understanding of current and future fuel demands. The team will develop a heat map of current emissions based on user feedback and EPA's own operational data, as well as develop a forward plan of actions to assist EPA and the boating community in transitioning to low carbon fuels.



The team will be reaching out to organisations, operators, and users in the coming months, and would appreciate your feedback to help plan EPA's future direction as it works toward its goal of being net zero by the end of this decade.

Commenting on the development of a net zero plan for the Port, Rex Frost, the Chair of the Port User Group said:

*“The Exeter Port User Group welcomes the move to plan for Net Zero and looks forward to EPA and users working together to reduce carbon emissions.”*

## EXE ESTUARY TRAIL: COURTLANDS BOARDWALK TEMPORARY CLOSURE BETWEEN LYMPSTONE AND EXMOUTH

Further to the previous update in the summer edition, works are well underway to replace Courtlands Boardwalk between Lymstone and Exmouth.

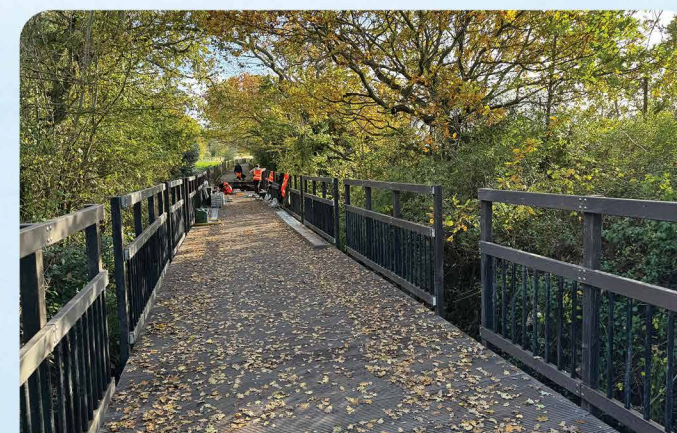
With the temporary site compound set up in the field along Sowdens Lane the Exe Estuary Trail was closed on the 18th of September to begin the replacement of Courtlands Boardwalk. A diversion has been in place while the trail remains closed.

During this time hedge trimming has also been undertaken to take full advantage of the closed section and to minimise further disruption to users of the trail.

Some of the removed timber elements were in very poor condition. It is unlikely that the old timber boardwalk would have survived another winter season.

This highlights the importance of undertaking these works now to keep the vitally important trail open for all to enjoy for many years to come.

For the latest updates on the scheme's progress visit [tinyurl.com/courtlands-board-walk](http://tinyurl.com/courtlands-board-walk)







## SUCCESSFUL CONSULTATION ON STRATEGY TO BOOST LOCAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (DCIoS) Climate Adaptation Strategy was open for public consultation this summer and findings have now been disseminated.

The Strategy is intended to help communities across the Southwest to better understand the risks their area might face in future as climate change increasingly affects the UK. It will also help them to adapt to these changes, by identifying the parties responsible for ensuring community safety.

Climate change will continue to impact the South West, and the Exe Estuary could see changes in water quality, biodiversity, habitat composition and more. Taking a proactive approach to adapt to climate change will create a fairer, healthier, more resilient and prosperous society, as well as protecting what is special about the Exe Estuary.

Findings from 214 responses to the consultation are that 80% either “support the strategy” or “support some parts of the strategy but not others”.

76% are concerned about climate change, and 69% have felt the effects of climate change already.

Overall, respondents recognise that immediate action on climate change and adaptation is needed, and that the Strategy is comprehensive and evidence-based. Feedback to be considered for the final Strategy includes greater quantification of costs and clearer timelines, more detailed evaluation metrics, and more explicit connections between national work and regional priorities.

The DCIoS Climate Impacts Group (CIG) commissioned this Strategy, led by consultants RSK Group (including subsidiaries ADAS and WRc). The CIG will now work to finalise the Strategy and collaborate with organisations to put it into practice.

Follow Devon Climate Emergency on social media or go to [www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk](http://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk) for updates. You can also read the Consultation Report and draft Strategy at [www.climate resilient-dcios.org.uk](http://www.climate resilient-dcios.org.uk)

# POWDERHAM MOORINGS

Deep Water Moorings (up to 1.8 LWS)  
Easily accessible from Starcross  
Available on license from Powderham Estate

T: 01626 890243 E: [moorings@powderham.co.uk](mailto:moorings@powderham.co.uk)



## DAWLISH WARREN BEACH MANAGEMENT POST-SCHEME REVIEW

The Environment Agency (EA) Dawlish Warren Beach Management Post-scheme Review is now complete. The investigation looked at existing, and proposes any changes to current Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) for the site that was originally identified as part of the Exe Estuary FCERM Strategy 2013. This Strategy is planned to be updated following further review and consultation by 2027.

The review proposals identified follow engagement and feedback from a range of stakeholders, including regulators, landowners, interest groups and the public. This approach sought consensus but has highlighted ongoing disagreements between proposed flood and erosion risk management, environmental, amenity and commercial interests, both locally and estuary-wide, that are unlikely to be resolved in the short-term.

The review recommends that, in the main, no changes are proposed to existing site management as it supports the principles of the current Exe Estuary FCERM Strategy and Dawlish Warren Beach Management Scheme FCERM objectives ie ‘Securing sand spit storm sheltering function to wider estuary until 2040s’ and ‘Reducing local flood risk to Dawlish Warren Village’. The review also recognised however that current site management does not support the Environmental objective of ‘Achieving at least ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition for the Dawlish Warren Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and ‘favourable’ condition for the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) sites at sand spit by 2030’ which are unlikely to be met. Therefore, the proposals identified and feedback collated from this review will remain draft until updated and finalised as part of the Exe Estuary FCERM Strategy update by 2027.

Key Messages identified from the review include

- The spit will continue to change with ongoing trend for beach lowering which will increase flood and erosion risk locally and estuary-wide over time
- Main revetment defences and flood wall provide a good standard of protection and there is justification to maintain for the long term
- Further beach recharge is not justified for FCERM purposes
- Existing geotube and groyne defences reduce flood and erosion risk but are unsustainable, work against natural processes and, to meet planning conditions, need to be removed by 2049
- The exposed geotube will continue to be ‘patch repaired’ until removal by 2049
- Remnant gabion baskets reduce flood and erosion risk to the wider estuary but are unsustainable and work against natural processes
- Remnant groynes (16-18) have lost FCERM function and should be removed prior to failure. Work during autumn this year has already removed a majority of groynes 18 and 17.
- Risk to the wider estuary will increase due to the combined effects of climate change and the spit gradually losing its wave barrier function following the removal of structures prior to 2049
- Risk Management Authorities, utilities, infrastructure providers and stakeholders need to be aware of risks and plan for this eventuality
- Ongoing disagreement about how the site should be managed is recognised but unlikely to be resolved in the short term.

Details of proposals are identified in the Environment Agency reports, which can be viewed on the news page of [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org)

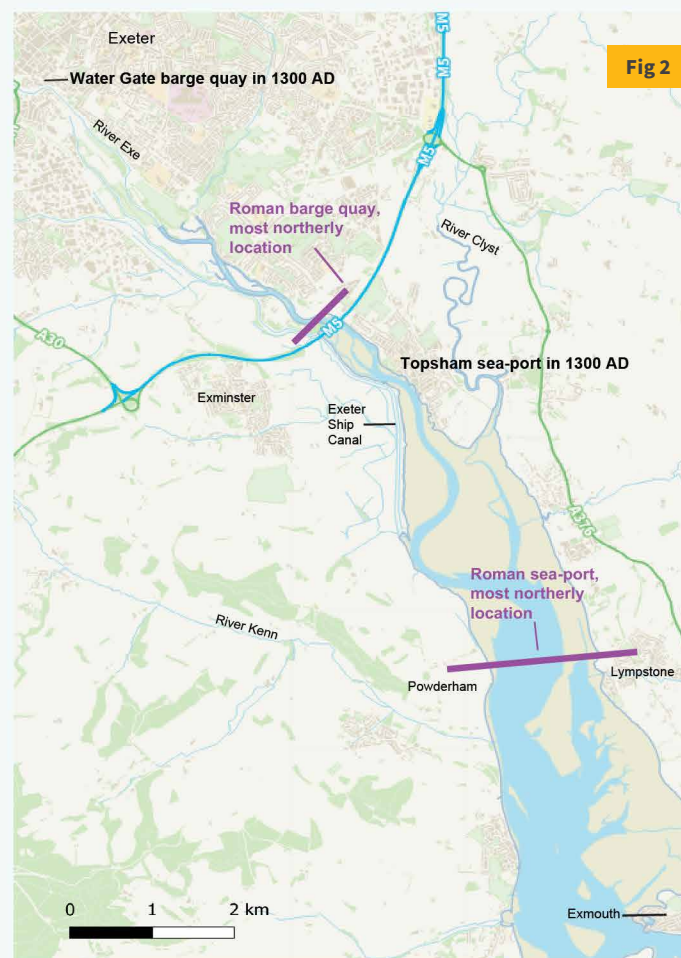
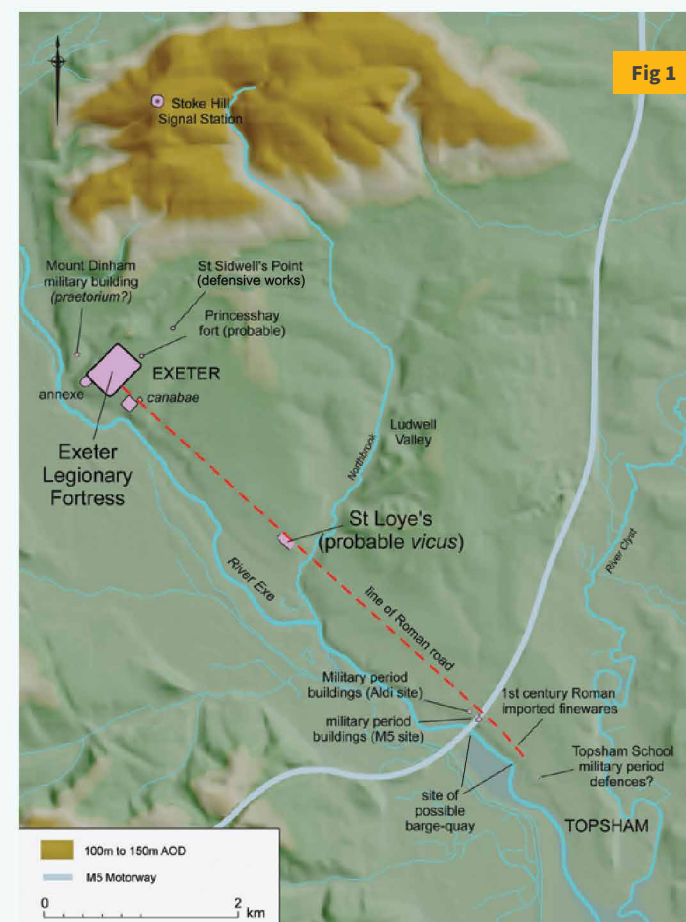


# ROMAN NAVIGATION OF THE EXE

The legionary fortress built (55 AD) in Exeter was partly supplied from Europe. However, no port or quay has yet been found. Archaeological excavation and examination of the 1st century tidal regime may show how the Romans moved goods from Europe.

Archaeologists have found a number of 1st century Roman sites alongside a Roman road (see Figure 1). Some sites were used by traders and artisans working with continental goods. The tidal regime/prism was examined to determine how they arrived from Europe.

The Exeter land surface was 25 metres higher during the last ice age compared to today. The ice retreated and the land surface sank. The fortress was built when the land was approximately 2.5 metres higher than it is today, resulting in the tidal prism being displaced southwards.



In about 1300 AD Topsham was a sea-port from where barges moved goods to Exeter (Water Gate, Figure 2) on the tide. In 1300 the land was approximately 1 metre higher than it is today.

The 1.5 metre difference between the land surface heights in 1300 and the Roman era was used to calculate how far south a Roman barge-quay and sea-port might have been. This displaced the tidal prism 4.3 kilometres southwards (see purple bars, Figure 2), i.e. the tide did not reach Exeter; a Roman barge-quay might have been between the M5 bridge and Topsham; and Powderham might have been the most northerly location for a sea-port.

The Romans may have transhipped goods from sea-going vessels to barges in the estuary. The barges moved on the tide to a quay south of the M5 bridge, goods were then road-transported to Exeter.

Academic paper - <https://zenodo.org/records/7555165>

Academic conference poster - <https://zenodo.org/record/7068157>

Author: Steve Kaye. [wumptid@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wumptid@yahoo.co.uk)

# SALMON RUN: RUNNING WITH THE EXE SALMON



Salmon Run celebrates and highlights the epic journey of the Atlantic salmon and the multiple challenges the salmon face including climate change, post-industrial weirs, overfishing and river pollution. On 24th September 2023, World Rivers Day, participants aged from 3 to 72 took part in Salmon Run running up the river Exe to the spawning grounds on Exmoor.

Salmon Run is a community celebration of the Exe salmon which is an integral part of our history and culture in Exeter and the Exe catchment, its abundance giving the river its' name (Exe = Isca = abundance of fish).

The Atlantic Salmon population in the Exe is 'at risk' along with 84% of UK salmon rivers. Overall national populations are down 70% since 1980s.

A hand-crafted salmon icon called Samantha emerged from the sea at Mamhead Slipway in Exmouth and was carried by 6 relay running teams, each running a section of the 50 miles from Exmouth to Tarr Steps along the river Exe, through Thorverton, Tiverton and Exebridge.



Also starting at 8 am in Exmouth was a group of 'ultra' runners who ran the entire distance, one of whom astounded organisers by running at an average of 8.4 minutes per mile!

In the second relay section, a 5k community run in Exeter from Salmon Pool to Exwick Mill field, the shoal of runners waiting for the salmon to arrive found out about the work of Westcountry Rivers Trust and Friends of the River Exe and played a Weir Leaping game led by a master of ceremonies.



The project is supported by the River Exe Tributaries Association and Westcountry Rivers Trust and linked to their Strategic Exe Weirs project. This was the second year of Salmon Run, conceived and managed by Tidelines, and was also part of the inaugural Festival of the Exe managed by Friends of the River Exe.

Arthur Finch, 22, a MSc student from Exeter University who ran in the relay, said: "It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience - it's increased my knowledge of salmon in rivers across the UK and shed light on the issues they face."

More info and Salmon Run podcast: [www.tidelines.uk](http://www.tidelines.uk)

Photo of 3 runners with the cardboard sign: Credit Carol Jay  
All other photos: Credit Vanessa Miles



# HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS YEAR'S WINTER WADERS

Photo Credits: Nick D'Agorne

It's no surprise that an estimated three million adults go birdwatching every year in Britain. But with it being time for our beloved winter waders to return to the Exe Estuary, how can we make sure we are making the most of these winter migrants? Here are a few tips for how to enjoy the #winterwaders this year.



Sanderling (winter plumage)

## Where to see them (all can be reached by train):

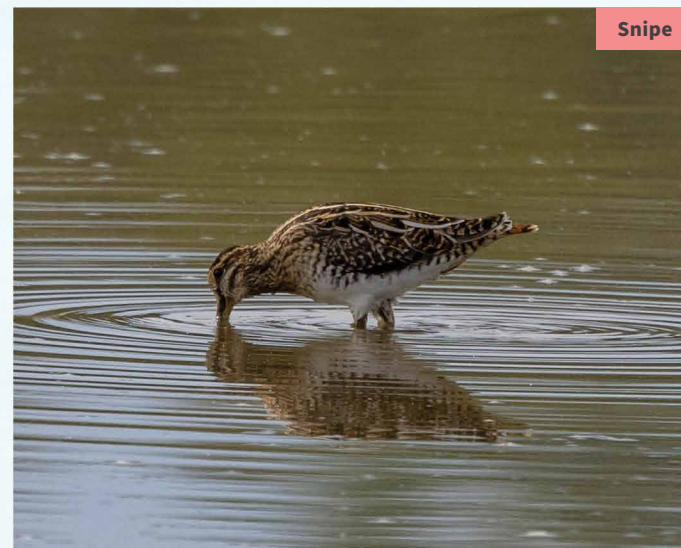
- **Bowling Green Marsh (best at high tide)**  
The Lookout, Bowling Green Road, Topsham, EX3 0BG. Parking available within Topsham or at Darts Farm.
- **Dawlish Warren spit (best at high tide)**  
Walk East along the dunes from either Dawlish Warren inner or outer car park (both at EX7 ONF).
- **Exmouth Duck Pond (best views of the birds as the tide is falling, with peak around 2 hrs after high tide)**  
Imperial Road short or long stay car park (EX8 1BY).
- **Topsham's Goat Walk (the mudflats are exposed at low tide)**  
Southern end of the Strand heading towards the lookout. Parking available within Topsham.



Ringed Plover

## How to experience them:

- Whilst on a walk along Topsham's Goat Walk or across the dunes and beaches of the Dawlish Warren Nature Reserve.
- Cycle along the well-used Exe Estuary Trail. If you're feeling energetic you can complete the whole loop via the Starcross to Exmouth ferry! (Closed for the winter season at the end of October).
- Try a guided bird watching cruise down the Exe Estuary from Exmouth Marina with Stuart Line Cruises.
- Take along your camera so you can savour the moment even when you've gone back home!



Snipe

## Refuel along the way...

- The Bridge Inn (Topsham) is the perfect place for an evening pint with a Redshank, Knot, or Heron.
- Before heading along the Goat Walk, pop into the Circle Café (Topsham) for a coffee and a sweet treat!
- Teign Bean @ The Warren (Dawlish Warren) is the perfect place to start a day of #winterwader watching, providing sweet and savoury pastries, delicious hot drinks, and bike hire (even electric for those needing more than caffeine to fuel their day).
- For a quick escape from the city, Double Locks (Exeter) can be perfect for a cuppa, a pint, or a bowl of chips after seeing the Sandpipers of RSPB's Matford Marshes.
- Or if you are combining your wader watching in Exmouth's Duck Pond with a walk along the beach, why not stop at the award-winning Krispies for some of the best fish and chips in the country.



Dunlin (winter plumage)

## Top tips!!

- For most sites, time your visit with the high tide as the birds will likely be closer to the shore feeding on the mudflats.
- Bring binoculars! They don't have to be expensive or high tech to help get you stuck in! Or pop into The Lookout at RSPB Bowling Green Marsh where you can borrow a pair to use in the hide.
- A little research never hurts... simple bird guide books, asking the local bird watchers in the hide, or watching the "Devon Local Nature Partnership winter wader webinar" (search on YouTube).
- Join a bird group! You don't have to be an expert to join others in what you love, learn more and meet similarly minded people in your area. Local community boards and Facebook can be great places to look at what groups are near you.



Black-tailed Godwit (winter plumage)



Curlew

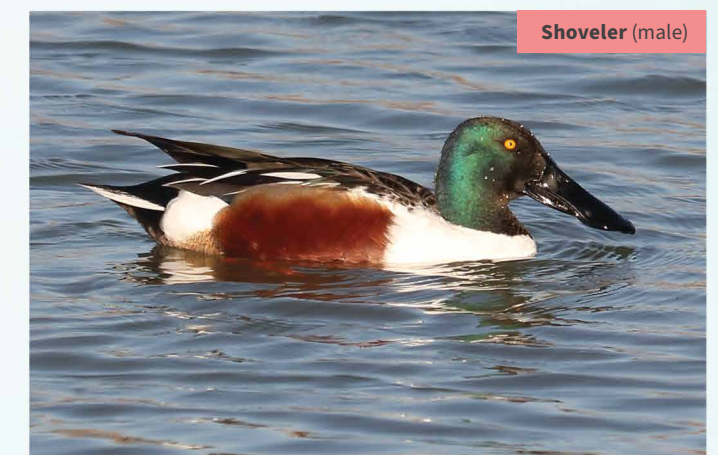


Knot

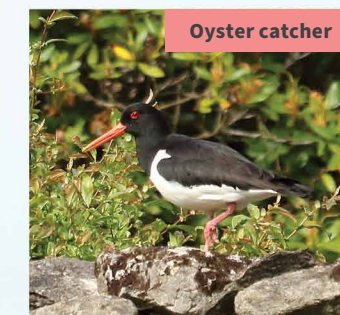
## How to help conserve our winter waders:

To better protect our amazing wildlife, we need to know more about it! Citizen science is the practice of involving the public in scientific research by collaborating with them to expand the knowledge base of the subject. For migrating species, such as many of our winter waders, this means knowing where they are and when. This can be done through reporting what you see on your bird watching days...

- Download the free 'iNaturalist' app and add a photo and location of any wildlife species you see to get help with identifying them or to automatically share the data onto the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) that can then be used in research projects around the world!
- For those experienced bird watchers, why not get involved with the British Trust for Ornithology's Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) and help count waterbird populations near you.
- If you find a bird that you suspect has died of avian flu report it to DEFRA as soon as you can by filling in this 5 minute form:  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds)



Shoveler (male)



Oystercatcher



Lapwing



Redshank

Happy #winterwader watching and don't forget to follow Devon Local Nature Partnership to see what else is going on in Devon! Facebook: Devon Local Nature Partnership. Twitter (X): @DevonLNP



# GIVING SPACE FOR WILDLIFE

Throughout the year, the Exe Estuary provides rich feeding grounds for thousands of waterbirds. When you need to reset in nature, grab your coat and binoculars and head for the shore. At this time of year, as temperatures start to dip and the nights draw in, the magic of bird life on the estuary really comes to life!

During the winter months, more than 20,000 waterbirds are drawn to the Exe by plentiful food and a (relatively!) mild climate. Flock sizes reach internationally important numbers, and you can expect to see species such as Avocet, Curlew and Black-tailed Godwit feeding as the tide recedes.

Many waterbirds complete migrations of thousands of kilometres to reach the safety of the Exe Estuary wintering grounds, where they build up energy-reserves and ensure they are at their fittest for the breeding season that follows. To ensure they can rest and feed undisturbed by human activity, two wildlife refuges have been established in areas of particular importance. A voluntary agreement operates to encourage everyone to avoid entering these areas, from both the water and along the shore. The Dawlish Warren Refuge operates all year round, whilst the Exmouth Wildlife Refuge operates from 15 September to 31 December. More information can be found at [www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/wildlife-refuge](http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk/wildlife-refuge)



Outside of these areas, the entire estuary is protected for its wildlife significance and important range of habitats, so please remember to give birds space on all areas of the Exe.

Some human activities can disturb birds from their natural behaviour, often without us even realising. Collecting reports of disturbance events from the public and local groups is an important part of understanding our effect on bird populations locally and can help support monitoring of the wildlife refuges.

If you have witnessed a disturbance incident, you can now fill out our **new Wildlife Disturbance Form**, available on the Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) website. It is important that public reports of disturbance are as detailed as possible (as per the form), to ensure they aren't dismissed under scrutiny. The data collected will be stored within the EEMP database, and will be shared with our partners to support the ongoing management of the site.



Image Credit: David Price

To find the form, visit our website at [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org), and click on the 'Get involved' tab, you will see the Wildlife Disturbance Form in the drop-down menu.

**Let's protect and respect our amazing wildlife by ensuring we give it the space it needs to thrive for years to come.**

## EXETER PORT AUTHORITY MARINE SERVICES

We offer a range of professional marine services on the Exe Estuary, Exeter Canal and Quay:

- Mooring servicing, maintenance & installation
- Vessel towing & salvage
- Boat storage facilities
- Exe estuary visitor moorings
- Berths on the Exeter Canal



Tel: 01395 223 265  
email: [epa@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:epa@exeter.gov.uk)  
[www.exeter.gov.uk/epa](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/epa)

EPA Mooring Services, Trinity Buoy Store, Camperdown Terrace, Exmouth, EX8 1EQ



[www.exeter.gov.uk/epa](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/epa)





## GUIDED BIRD WATCHING WITH STUART LINE CRUISES



The River Exe is a beautiful and tranquil river that flows through the heart of Devon. The Exe is one of the most important estuaries in Europe for Wildlife, particularly for wintering waders and wildfowl. It is nationally renowned as a Site of Special Scientific Interest as an important habitat for these birds. Also, as a selected RAMSAR site, the wetlands are designated to be of international importance, owing to the abundance of wildlife which can be found there.



During winter, the Exe Estuary is home to over 200 species of birds, including many that are rare or endangered. The Estuary provides a vital feeding and breeding ground for these birds, the tidal mudflats on The Exe are home to a high quantity of various invertebrate species, making the estuary incredibly rich in biodiversity and an attractive feeding ground. During the winter months The River Exe is transformed into a haven for thousands of wading and migrating birds who are taking advantage of the shelter and vital food source which the River Exe provides.

Birds play an important role in the ecosystem of the River Exe and Exe Estuary; they help to control populations of insects and other small animals, and they also help to disperse seeds and pollinate plants, contributing to the wider natural environment which surrounds the river.

In addition to their ecological importance, birds also play a cultural and economic role in the Exe Estuary. Bird watching is a popular activity in the area, attracting visitors from all over the world to spot the wide variety of species that migrate to the area between October – March.

The tranquil waters of The River Exe allow us at Stuart Line Cruises to cruise along the scenic waters throughout the winter months, come rain or shine. During our Guided Bird Watching Cruises, the aim is to see a wide range of wildlife and our knowledgeable Ornithologists Dave Smallshire, Derek Carter and Jo King provide an informative and interesting live commentary throughout the cruise. Their commentary is pitched to be inclusive of all passengers on board - suitable for novices and certainly beneficial to experts who are learning and discovering about the local species, habitat, feeding methods and behaviours of the thousands of birds on the Exe Estuary and East Devon Coast. We are grateful to have them on board with us - their knowledge is truly invaluable and many 'Twitchers' return not only year-on-year but also several times within the season in many cases.

Our Bird Watching Season runs all the way through to March 2024 and with each trip being so unique, you never know what wildlife you may be able to spot. You can stay up to date with our sightings via our Blog on our website, which is updated by our Ornithologists after each cruise.

More information on our Guided Bird Watching Cruises can be found on our website, here [www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk](http://www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk)

## PLASTIC FREE EXMOUTH



Plastic Free Exmouth formed in 2019. Our aim is to remove single-use plastic from Exmouth. In September 2022, after 3 years of hard work and dedication for our steering group of volunteers, we achieved Plastic Free Community status for the town.

We are now continuing and strengthening our work to further our journey. We work with businesses, community groups, schools and individuals to remove single-use plastic and to share our message. In addition to this you will find volunteers on a weekly basis cleaning our beautiful beach.

So far this year Plastic Free Exmouth have collected over 1200kg of beach litter with the help of over 1000 volunteers as part of the weekly beach clean. Volunteers are invited to join Plastic Free Exmouth from 8.30am every Sunday morning from either end of Exmouth beach.

In the summer Lucy from PFE visited Withycombe Primary School to talk about our work, and we have completed beach cleans with a number of local primary schools including Bassetts Farm, Topsham Primary School and Exeter Road.

In October Plastic Free Exmouth were presented with the Judge's Special Award at the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. It was brilliant to be recognised for all the hard work Plastic Free Exmouth contribute to Exmouth.

For more information on how you can support Plastic Free Exmouth please email [plasticfreeexmouthuk@gmail.com](mailto:plasticfreeexmouthuk@gmail.com)

## HAVE YOU BORROWED AN EXMOUTH CUP YET?

In a drive to reduce waste and eliminate single-use cups, Exmouth Town Council and Sideshore have launched a reusable cup scheme for Exmouth. Each Exmouth Cup (free to borrow) can be used repeatedly – eventually replacing all the disposable cups in town.

### Compostable cups

We'd also like to dispel the myth that "compostable/biodegradable" single-use cups will be composted – they won't. They will end up in general waste or will contaminate the recycling bins.

### How does the Exmouth Cup scheme work?

Over the next few months, a total of 10,000 Exmouth Cups will be gifted to cafés in town. These cafés will promote the cups to their customers – the cups are free to borrow and return (washed or not) to any participating café. You can also drop off the cup to the Town Hall during opening hours.



### What's the cup made from?

Manufactured in the UK, the Exmouth Cup is made from polypropylene and designed to last for hundreds of uses. The cup is also dishwasher and microwave proof, insulated so hands are safe, but still keeps drinks hot or cold. It does not leach BPAs.

### I'll drink to that!

The goal is for every café / eatery in Exmouth to take part, so if your favourite café doesn't have any cups yet, ask them to get in touch with Zoey Cooper, Climate Officer for ETC ([zoey.cooper@exmouth.gov.uk](mailto:zoey.cooper@exmouth.gov.uk)) and we'll provide cups, information and marketing material.



## EXE AUTUMN CLEAN-UP



This year, volunteers came out in force to clean the estuary, with over 100 volunteers signed up for our Big September Clean-Up! After recording a significant decrease in rubbish where we usually clean, this year we decided to tackle Exmouth Seafront and The Maer.

This reduction in litter in our natural environment is great news! It indicates that litter-picks by volunteers really are having a positive effect on the estuary.

Volunteers collected a good pile of rubbish, including plastic and a lot of foam lagging... rubbish that would otherwise have ended up in our seas!

A huge **THANK YOU** to the local businesses who continue to support our Clean-Ups! These are local, family run businesses who really go out of their way to provide very generous treats for all of our volunteers:

**Krispies Fish & Chips** kindly offered everyone a delicious mini-meal! Much appreciated after a couple of hours cleaning the estuary area. Their fish is responsibly and sustainably sourced, and they have won lots of well-deserved awards. Visit their website to find out more at [www.krispies.co.uk](http://www.krispies.co.uk) or pop to one of their chippies to support your local business.

**Stuart Line Cruises** took all volunteers aboard a peaceful cruise of the estuary. Commentary from the skipper explained all the local sights, and we were lucky enough to spot three seals! If you would like a guided tour of the Exe to spot local wildlife and explore the landscape, take a look at their website at [www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk](http://www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk)

Also thanks to East Devon District Council Streetscene for equipment and collection of the rubbish. And a massive thanks to all of the amazing volunteers for working so hard to take care of our estuary!

## MORE ESTUARY TO LOVE @ LOWER OTTER RESTORATION PROJECT

This September was literally a watershed moment as 70 metres of embankment was removed to allow the tide to reach a large part of the Otter Estuary (Budleigh Salterton) for the first time in over 200 years.

Water now flows into over 6 km of purpose-built creek restoring 55 hectares of intertidal zone that will increase biodiversity and compensate for losses of this habitat due to sea level rise. The habitat will ultimately develop into nationally rare mudflat and saltmarsh.

Mud colonised by invertebrates will provide rich feeding grounds for wading birds such as blacktailed godwits, dunlin and redshank, whilst the warm, shallow waters will also be used by many fish, particularly juveniles. By providing more of this valuable habitat type, it is hoped that East Devon will see even more birdlife attracted to this and surrounding estuaries such as the Exe.

Members of the public can already enjoy the fantastic infrastructure improvements and newly-attracted wildlife through over 3 km of improved footpaths. Seven new viewing areas have also been constructed to enable visitors to enjoy, learn about and help us care for the flora, fauna and reserve.

One of the biggest coastal climate adaptation and habitat creation projects in England, the Lower Otter Restoration Project is partnership initiative between landowners Clinton Devon Estates and the Environment Agency. The site is to be managed by the Pebblebed Heath Conservation Trust as part of a National Nature Reserve. For more information please visit: [www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk](http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk)



## NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION EXMOUTH

### EYES ALONG THE COAST THE WORK OF THE NCI

NCI watchkeepers provide the eyes and ears along the coast, monitoring radio channels and providing a listening watch in poor visibility. When people get into trouble, we are there to alert HM Coastguard and direct the appropriate rescue services to the casualty.

In 1994 when two fishermen lost their lives off the Cornish coast near a recently closed Coastguard lookout, local people decided to open and restore the visual watch. When the first station was opened at Bass Point on the Lizard, NCI was born. Today 60 stations keep a visual watch around the coastline of England and Wales, with more in the pipeline.

High technology and sophisticated systems such as radar and telecommunications have vastly improved safety at sea, but there is no substitute for a watchful pair of eyes. Accidents do happen and a computer or technology cannot spot a distress flare, an overturned boat, a yacht with problems, a water sports enthusiast in difficulty, children or adults in trouble, or possible pollution incidents. That is why our lookouts and watchkeepers are an important service provider to all those who use our coastal waters, footpaths and coastline.

Each station is manned by a team of fully trained and dedicated volunteers who keep a daylight watch up to

365 days a year. Stations are equipped with telescopes, radar, telephone and weather instrumentation as well as up to date charts. Close contact with the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) aims to promote stations to Declared Facility Status in order to become an integral part of the National Search and Rescue structure.

Watchkeepers come from all walks of life and offer a wide range of skills and experience. Full training ensures that volunteers reach the high standard expected by the NCI and HM Coastguard. Regular assessments take place at all stations and refresher training programmes are run to maintain standards and keep watchkeepers up to date with the latest legislation or improved operational procedures.

Watchkeepers are the eyes and ears along the coast, keeping a visual watch, monitoring radio channels and providing a listening watch in poor visibility. They remain vigilant at all times. Surveillance work is mainly routine but watchkeepers are trained to act in an emergency, report to the MCA and, if required, co-ordinate with our search and rescue partners.

A log of all water-based activities is kept during each watch and, when requested, weather conditions can be passed to yachtsmen and fishermen before they put to sea. Also, with the new generation of web cams we can identify sea conditions for those who wish to check on the weather or sea state prior to doing any water sport activity, hopefully reducing the need for HM Coastguard response and RNLI callouts. During each watch other activities such as canoeing and diving etc are closely observed, as are bathers, walkers and climbers who use our shoreline.

Watchkeepers provide a vital link with all the emergency services and can provide an emergency contact point on land for both sea and shore users.



**NATIONAL COASTWATCH  
EXMOUTH**

**Use VHF Ch65  
for Radio Checks and Weather Reports  
Call Sign Exmouth NCI**

NATIONAL COASTWATCH  
*Eye Along The Coast*



# CONTENDER DINGHIES SEARCH FOR WIND



The Contender sailing dinghy National Championships were held at the Exe Sailing Club in September. Sadly, they coincided with a rare period during which there was virtually no wind. The fleet did launch on two occasions in the hope that they would find wind at sea and this photograph shows all the competitors waiting on Shelly Beach for the signal to launch. Even though there was no racing, the competitors said they had a great few days in Exmouth with one even saying that it was the best championship he had been to. The International Contender is a single-handed high performance sailing dinghy, designed in 1967 as a possible successor to the Finn dinghy for Olympic competition.

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# FOR PEOPLE, FOR WILDLIFE, FOR THE FUTURE