

NORTHUMBERLAND

MAX MILES ON FOOT: 4 MIN TIME: 3-4 HOURS

ROSS BACK SANDS

Sweeping beaches, sand dunes and farmland offer excellent birding

Turnstone



REMO SAVSAR/ALAMY

Ross forms part of the Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve, and is also a working farm and community. The beach is accessed by a one-mile walk

on a public footpath with cattle and sheep. Return by the same route. Access inland from the beach ends at the first fence, and no further inland.

It is best to visit in the winter and migration periods, as visitor numbers in the summer are high. Please keep to the path at all times. Access along the beach can be restricted due to the Little Tern colony; walk only on wet or hard sand and take everything you need with you, as the beach is remote.

STEVE NEWMAN

WHERE TO WATCH

1 The car park and path through the farm buildings gave us Chiffchaff, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Kestrel, Curlew and Buzzard. The fields are well worth scanning for winter visitors.

2 The Long Bog is a raised pathway across the wet area. Snipe, Meadow Pipit, Grey Heron, Sky Lark and Pied and Yellow Wagtail were all spotted on our visit. Look out for waders, especially when the area floods.

3 The entrance to the footpath is clearly marked here, and the high dune is a great place for seawatching. Little, Arctic, Common and Sandwich Terns can be seen as well as Gannet, Shag and Cormorant.

4 Keep at least 100 yards away from the seals here. The rocks, mud and sand spit gave us Eider, Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Ringed Plover and Turnstone. In the winter, Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes are often seen.

PRACTICAL INFO

POSTCODE: NE70 7EN
 GRID REF: NU 133 372
 MAPS: OS Explorer 340, OS Landranger 75
 PARKING: Turn off the Northumberland Coastal Route and follow the road until you come to a small designated car park of five cars on the left and a sign prohibiting you from going any further. From May to September parking can be horrendous here with tourists parking on the verges
 TERRAIN: Flat on footpath across fields and sand
 ACCESS: Open all year round
 FACILITIES: None. Shops, café and toilets are found at Belford

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

Grey Seals haul out on the sand, but do keep a safe distance away from them.



DAVID TILING PHOTO LIBRARY/ALAMY

TARGET SPECIES

SUMMER

- Little Tern
- Ringed Plover
- Crossbill

AUTUMN

- Snow Bunting
- Osprey
- Great Skua

WINTER

- Whooper Swan
- Short-eared Owl
- Red-necked Grebe

SPRING

- Yellow Wagtail
- Grey Plover
- Sky Lark



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