

Scolt Head Island National Nature Reserve

Managed by



Fact File

LOCATION

TF802463, north west of Burnham Market. Landranger 132.

HABITATS

Sand dunes, mud flats, saltmarsh, shingle.

SPECIES

Wintering birds eg brent and pink-footed geese, breeding birds eg terns, ringed plover, oystercatcher, sand dune and saltmarsh flora.

ACCESS

By boat from Burnham Overy Staithe. The quay is well signed and the times of boat departures for the island are advertised. Visiting times are limited by the tides. Do not walk across the mud flats to the island unless you know the area very well. Dogs are not allowed on the reserve between mid-April and mid-August, and must be kept under control at other times. From mid-April to mid-August, visitors must not enter the ternery. Educational parties can apply to visit the reserve : please contact English Nature at 60, Bracondale, Norwich, NR1 2BE, telephone (01603) 598400 for further details.

CAR PARKING

At Burnham Overy Staithe near the quay.



Photo: Peter Wakely

Scolt Head Island NNR

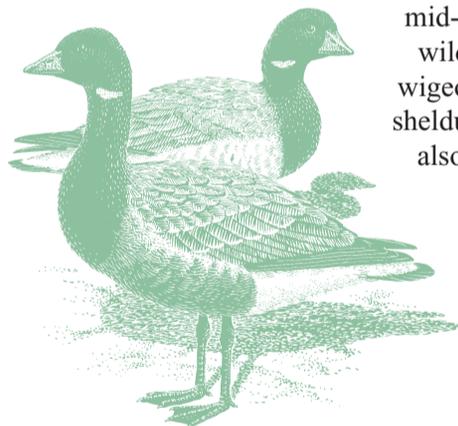
Scolt Head Island is an area some 727 ha in size of continually changing sand dune, beach and saltmarsh, and is part of the North Norfolk Coast SSSI. It is owned jointly by The National Trust and Norfolk Wildlife Trust and has been a nature reserve since 1923. It is managed under lease by English Nature. The island is much used for ecological research and teaching by schools and universities.

The “skeleton” of Scolt Head Island, which experts now believe formed only 1000 years ago (it was thought to be much older), is made of glacial shingle above which sand and silts were deposited. Four major habitats, shingle, intertidal mud and sand flats, sand dunes and saltmarsh have been identified on Scolt

Head Island: these also occur at Blakeney Point. The vegetation of Scolt Head Island is very similar to that at Blakeney Point.

Many beautiful and interesting plants characteristic of these coastal habitats such as sea campion, bird’s-foot trefoil, sea bindweed, sea holly and shrubby sea blite may be seen. During the summer breeding season, the nests of several shoreline birds, including ringed plover and oystercatcher occur in shingle scrapes near the landing point. Both eggs and chicks are well camouflaged. At the Ternery to the west of the island, which is closed to visitors during the breeding season (mid-April to mid-August), several species of tern raise broods in the shingle and sand dunes. The most numerous are the sandwich terns : the reserve can hold up to 25% of the UK total of nesting sandwich terns. Common terns, little terns and small numbers of arctic terns also nest here.

During the spring and autumn bird migrations, additional species may be seen such as flycatchers, warblers and chats. In the early summer, swifts, swallows and house martins pass from east to west as they arrive from Africa. Scolt is internationally important for its over-wintering populations of geese. Dark-bellied brent geese arrive in late September from Siberia. Pink-footed geese from Iceland and Greenland roost at the west end of the island and may number 50,000 by mid-winter. Other wildfowl such as wigeon, mallard, shelduck and teal may also be seen.



brent geese

Further reading: “Blakeney Point and Scolt Head Island” by The National Trust, edited by Hilary Allison and John Morley, 1989.

Management

Scolt is a non-intervention reserve where natural coastal processes are allowed to occur. Control of predator species is required, however, to prevent nesting birds from losing chicks and eggs. Management is also subject to a variety of Common Rights which are registered across the whole area.

Scolt Head NNR
Scale 1cm = 0.71km

