

Exe Water Users Code

A guide for water users on the Exe Estuary



Exe Estuary

As well as being an ideal site for a wide range of recreational activities, the Exe Estuary is also home to an abundance of wildlife. Whilst exploring this beautiful area, please be considerate to other users and wildlife.

This guide is aimed at all water users, from large commercial boats to small kayaks.

Exe Estuary Navigation Byelaws

Check for information at access points and adhere to the Navigation Byelaws (Max penalty £1,000):

- Byelaw 4: Do not exceed speed limit as defined by charts and buoyage: 10 Knots Max.
- Byelaw 4a: Power boat area: powerboating allowed in marked area when predicted tidal height is 3.8m or more.
- Byelaw 5: Skiing only allowed in ski area marked by yellow buoys.
- Byelaw 6: Navigate with due care and attention and with reasonable care for others.

* For radio checks, current weather and tides plus live inshore waters forecasts call Exmouth National Coastwatch on Channel 65 (call sign "Exmouth NCI") or phone 01395 222492 or tidetimes.co.uk for Exmouth Dock.



Safety

Exe-pect the unexpected

- Check tides, currents, wind and weather before launching.*
- Let someone ashore know your plans and expected return time.
- Always carry a suitable means of calling for help (e.g. waterproof VHF radio, mobile phone, whistle).
- Carry the correct safety equipment, including a personal flotation device.

Exe-plore the estuary

- Be visible: make sure lights are used at night, including for paddlesports.
- Where appropriate, use launch points marked on the map.

Exe-ist with other water users

- Keep noise and wake to a minimum to not impact upon other users and wildlife.
- Access points / slipways should be kept clear at all times and do not park vehicles on the foreshore.
- Safely dispose of waste and prevent pollution from your boat.
- Be aware of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and explore training opportunities.

Exe-clamation!

- If in difficulty, stay with your craft: it provides buoyancy and extra visibility.
- In an emergency dial 999 (or VHF Ch16) and ask for the Coastguard.

**Prevent litter:
Bin it or take it home**





Watch Out For Wildlife

The whole of the Exe Estuary is an important site for wildlife, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). During winter, tens of thousands of birds depend on the Exe to rest and feed on their long migratory journeys from areas as far away as Siberia.



Avocet



Dark-bellied Brent Goose

All water users, including quiet, non-powered craft, such as kayakers and stand-up paddleboarders, can take steps to look after the site and avoid disturbing birds:

- Avoid voluntary Wildlife Refuges where safe to do so (see map).
- Avoid areas where birds are feeding or roosting.
- Avoid dragging vessels through shallow water as this can damage habitats.
- Choose anchoring sites carefully, avoiding eelgrass beds.

Enjoy watching wildlife but keep a distance of 100m, especially from birds gathering at high water. Where practical, avoiding activities two hours either side of high tide during September to March can further minimise disturbance to birds.



Eelgrass



Grey Seal

Please be aware that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the wildlife in an SSSI or to damage or disturb land known to be an SSSI. It is also an offence to take down, damage or obstruct an SSSI notice or sign.



Want To Know More?

EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

Exe Estuary Officer 01392 382236

SAFETY/POLLUTION

Coastguard 999 or VHF Ch16

HARBOUR AUTHORITY (River & Canal Office)

Office hours 01392 265791

Out of hours emergency 0845 351 1060

For general information www.exeter.gov.uk/waterways

LOST & FOUND CRAFT

Contact the nearest mooring group or marina. Contact the coastguard in case individuals are overboard or missing.

Exeter City Council Harbour Authority should be contacted if a vessel is a hazard to navigation.

FISHERIES

Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority 01803 854648
07740 175479 (D&SIFCA)

WILDLIFE

Dawlish Warren Visitor Centre 01626 863980
Exmouth Local Nature Reserve 01395 516551
Natural England – Devon Office 0300 060 3900
Injured marine mammals (BDMLR) 01825 765546
SEDHRP Mitigation habitatmitigation@eastdevon.gov.uk
Officers

For further information, Exe leaflets and other codes of conduct, visit the Exe Estuary Management Partnership website at www.exe-estuary.org or contact the Exe Estuary Officer at exeestua@devon.gov.uk.



These codes have been produced by the Exe Estuary Management Partnership and South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership, supported by local users and organisations.



SOUTH EAST DEVON
HABITAT REGULATIONS
PARTNERSHIP

Exe Estuary: North Section



The whole of the Exe Estuary is a nationally and internationally important site for wildlife. Designations are in place to conserve and enhance the estuary and its wildlife, which include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA).

Key

- Wildlife Refuge
- Slipway - please use Mamhead Slipway for powered craft when conditions allow (tidal flow near mouth of estuary can be strong, up to and over 5 knots)
- Launch points for small, non-powered craft (when conditions are safe)
- Tidal flow up to and over 5 knots
- Navigation Channel - guide only. The navigation channel is susceptible to change over time and marked accordingly on charts and with buoys
- Power Boat Area - Byelaw 4a (when tidal height is 3.8m or more)
- Water Ski Area - Byelaw 5
- Dawlish Warren Landing Area (only from 1 April to 4 September inclusive) – avoid landing outside this area
- Do not exceed 10 knot speed limit as defined by charts and buoyage – Byelaw 4

Wildlife Refuges

Wildlife Refuges have been identified as vital areas for protected birds. Eelgrass beds in these areas are a valuable food source for migrating Dark-bellied Brent Geese, whilst Dawlish Warren Refuge is recognised as one of the most important high-tide roost sites on the estuary.

Water users are asked to avoid entering these voluntary Wildlife Refuges where safe to do so, to help avoid bird disturbance.

Why is it important to prevent bird disturbance?

When birds are disturbed they are prevented from resting and eating, which can mean they have to use lots of scarce energy. It can be a matter of life and death for the birds, who may already be exhausted from flying 3,000 miles or even more. Disturbance can cause extra stress because birds can be forced to visit areas which don't have as much food available.

Dawlish Warren Wildlife Refuge:

Please avoid all year round.

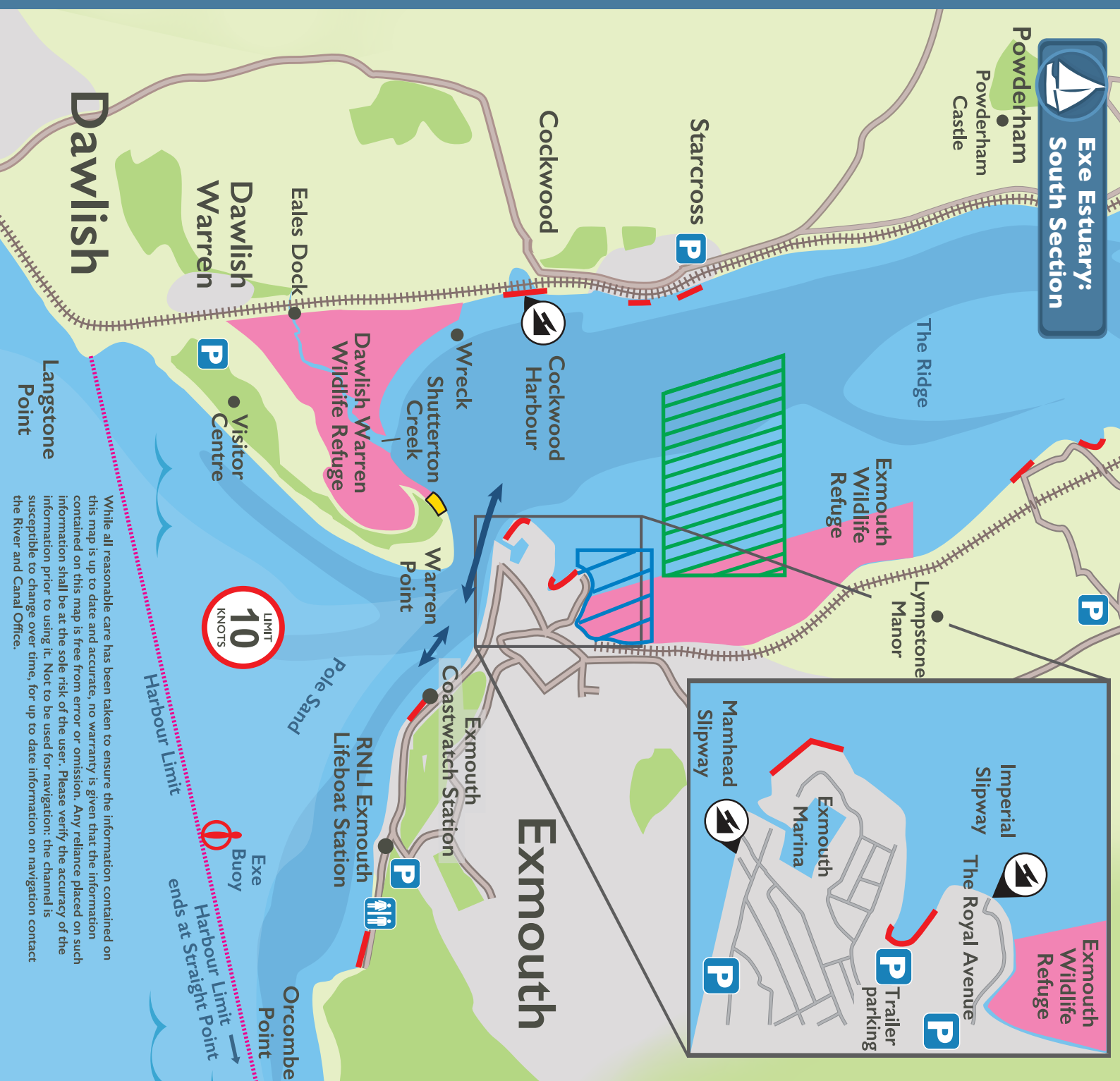
Eales Dock are permitted to have continued access via Shutterton Creek by agreement

Exmouth Wildlife Refuge: Please

avoid from mid-September to end of December. Power boats and water skis will have continued access within their designated areas, under separate agreement.

More information can be found at

www.exwildliferefuge.org.uk



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