

Where is Waters of Philorth?

Waters of Philorth Local Nature Reserve lies two miles south east of Fraserburgh town centre on the B9033 to St. Combs and Inverallochy.



How do I get there?

The Local Nature Reserve can be reached on foot by walking along the beach of Fraserburgh Bay or by car on the B9033. Parking is available on the site. You can also catch the No. 275 bus service which runs between Fraserburgh and St. Combs every half an hour.

Waters of Philorth Local Nature Reserve is managed on your behalf by Aberdeenshire Council.

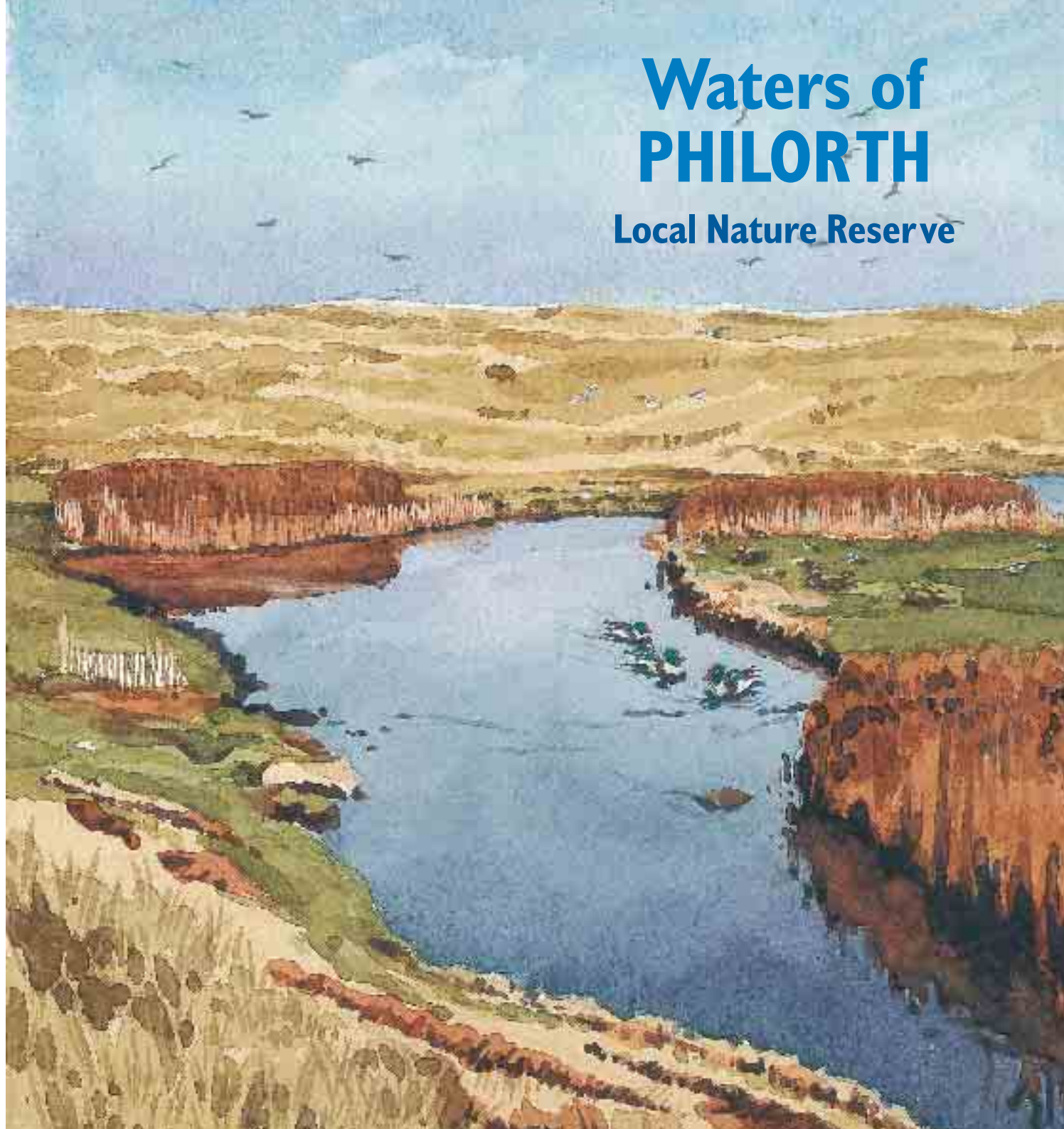


This project is being part financed by the European Community, European Regional Development Fund



Waters of PHILORTH

Local Nature Reserve



Waters of PHILORTH

Local Nature Reserve

Waters of Philorth has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve because of the variety of habitats that can be found here. On your visit you will see sand dunes, marshes, reed beds, the river and its estuary, and the beach which all combine to provide an attractive haven for wildlife and outdoor surroundings for you to enjoy.

The sand dunes on the reserve have developed during the last century and the river course has altered considerably as a result of this. The site's history of moving sands adds a distinctive character to the reserve making it a fascinating area to learn about the natural environment and local history.



Ladies Bedstraw



Northern Marsh Orchid



Cowslip



Birdsfoot Trefoil



Marram Grass

The map overleaf shows you the variety of habitats you can see and the range of plants, birds and insects that live on, or visit, the site. Use your eyes and ears to learn more about the reserve and its inhabitants on your visit.

Country Code

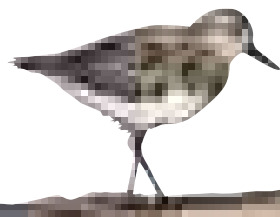
We hope you enjoy your visit to the Local Nature Reserve and ask you to take the following steps to make the site better for people and wildlife:

- Please use the litter bins or take your litter home.
- Please keep your dog under control and clean up after it using the dog bins.
- Stay on the main footpaths – the sand dunes are fragile and easily damaged by erosion.

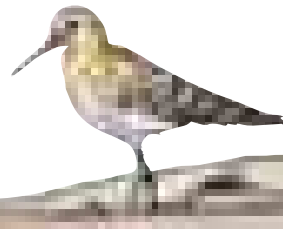
Waters of Philorth is a pleasant place to walk or just sit and picnic. The Local Nature Reserve is open all year round with footpaths providing access to Fraserburgh Bay, a three mile stretch of golden sands, and a walk along the river bank.



Heron



Sanderling



Dunlin



Oystercatcher



Redshank



Ringed Plover

Waters of Philorth Local Nature Reserve

Sand Dunes

Sand dunes form when dry sand, blowing inshore, meets an obstruction. This is often the debris and stranded sea weed at the high water mark. Young dunes form on the sheltered side of the obstruction and grow higher and higher as plants colonise the dunes and trap more and more sand.



Marram Grass colonising a young dune

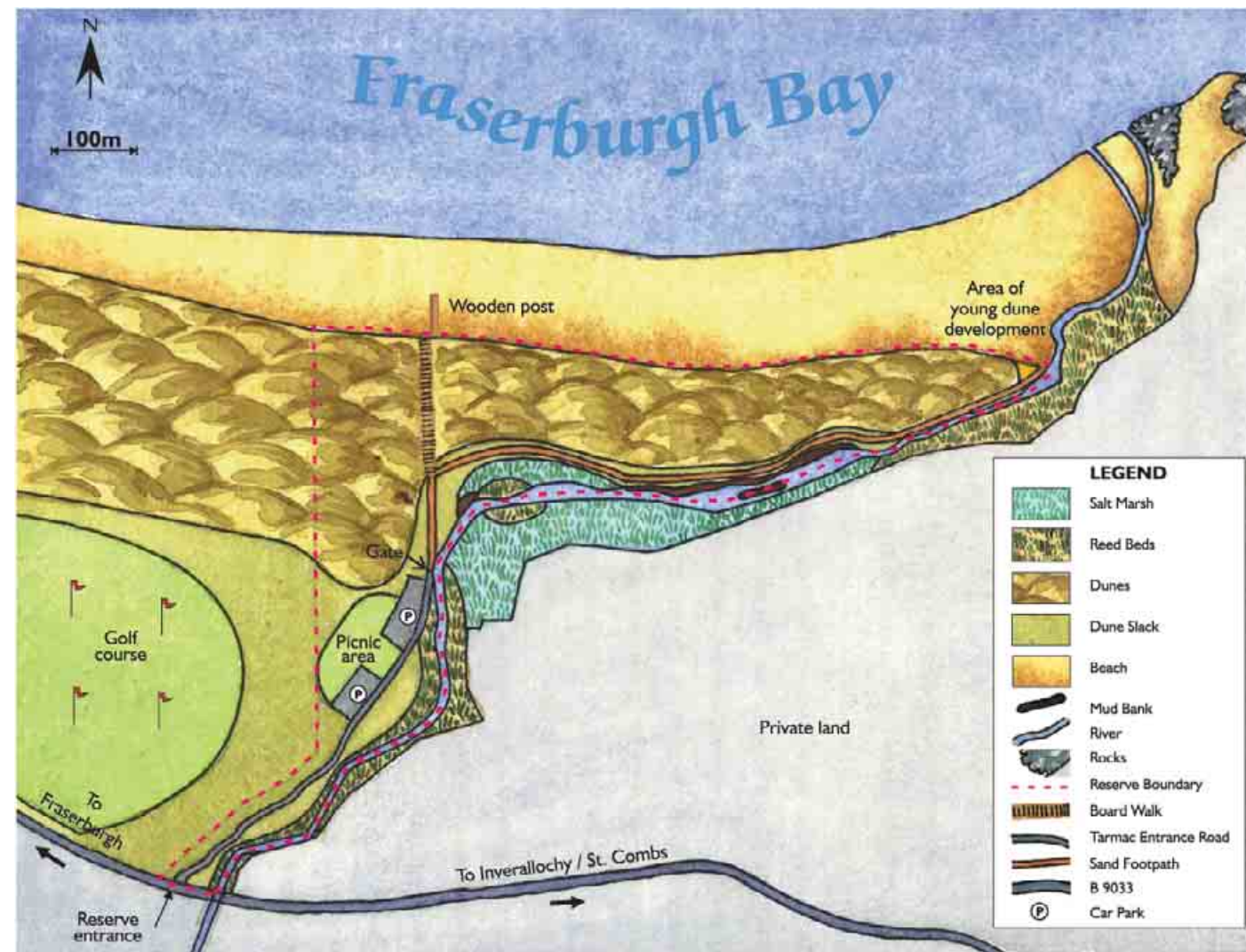
The sand dunes within the Local Nature Reserve are the youngest of all the dunes along Fraserburgh Bay. They began to develop in the late 1930's and you can find how they developed by reading the interpretation panels on the site.

The dune system is still extending eastwards – by the river mouth you can see young dunes forming where marram grass is trapping and binding blown sand.

Away from the exposed beach the sand dunes are more sheltered and contain a great variety of plants and animals. Flowering plants such as scots lovage, lady's bedstraw, bird's-foot trefoil, harebell, northern marsh orchid and wild pansy, attract butterflies and moths. The small copper butterfly and the six spot burnet moth with its distinctive red spots can be often seen on site during the summer months.



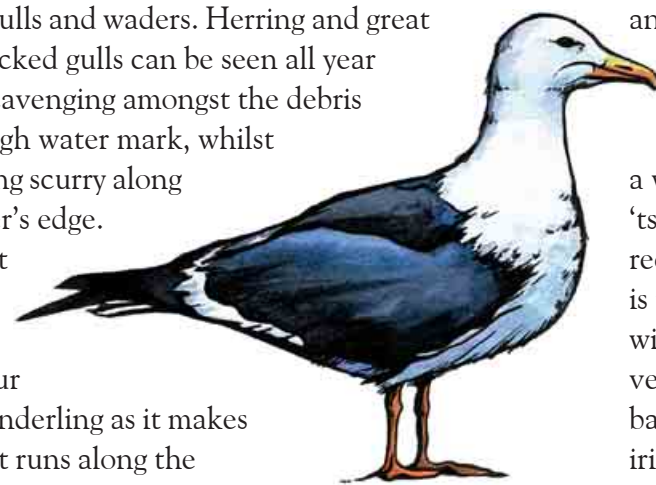
Six Spot Burnet Moth



The tall wooden post in the sand dunes marks the end of the board walk which leads from the beach back to the car park and picnic area.

Foreshore

The exposed beach attracts groups of feeding and resting gulls and waders. Herring and great black backed gulls can be seen all year round scavenging amongst the debris at the high water mark, whilst sanderling scurry along the water's edge. Look out for the comical behaviour of the sanderling as it makes short fast runs along the foreshore.



Great Black Backed Gull

Reed Beds

The tall vegetation of the reed bed provides shelter and food for both breeding and migrant birds including reed bunting and sedge warbler. Listen out for the rustle of the reeds on a windy day and the sharp 'tseek-tseek-tseek' call of a the reed buntings. Common reed is the main plant species within these areas. Other tall vegetation along the river bank includes the yellow flag iris and a variety of sedges.



Yellow Flag Iris

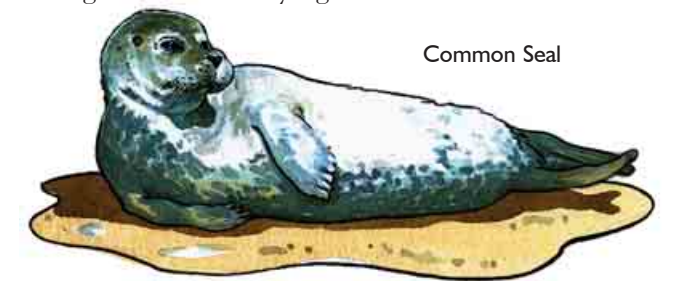
River

Waters of Philorth is an important feeding site for many migrating birds, especially in winter. You will be able to see a wide range of wading birds and wildfowl catching their food on the river and at the river mouth. Redshank, oystercatcher, grey heron and shelduck are seen throughout the year with dunlin and sanderling most common during the winter. Listen out for the loud voice of the oystercatchers who make a 'pee-wit' call.



Shelduck

Where the river enters the sea, the rocky shore line of Cairnbulg Point, on the east side of the river, provides a resting place for cormorants, often with their wings outstretched. You may even be lucky enough to see seals lying on the rocks.



Common Seal

Mud Flats and Salt Marsh

The sand dunes provide shelter at the river mouth. As a result the mud carried downstream by the river and the sand carried by the sea at high tide are deposited to form mud and sand banks. The invertebrates that live within the sand and mud provide a rich food source for many birds.

Many different wading birds feed in these areas. They include oystercatcher, redshank and a variety of gulls. The interpretation board on site will help you to identify some of them.

The salt marshes are areas flooded with salt water by the occasional high tide. The plants living on the salt marshes have to be tolerant of the wet, salty conditions. In summer you will see the pink flowers of thrift and sea rocket.