

# Exe Dog Walking Code

## A guide for walking your dog around the Exe Estuary



### Exe Estuary

Welcome to the Exe Estuary. The Exe is a beautiful area to explore and is enjoyed by many dog walkers.

The whole of the Exe Estuary is a nationally and internationally important site for wildlife, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA).

This guide offers advice on how dog walkers can enjoy the Exe, whilst being considerate to other users and wildlife, particularly in sensitive areas or at certain times of the year.

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



### Walkies

For a safe and happy walk with your dog, please follow the advice below:

- Always keep your dog under effective control, on a short lead or close enough for you to call your dog back on command, as other users may be wary of dogs off leads.
- Always bag and bin your dog's poo – it can affect water quality of the estuary. Any litter bin will do!
- Be aware of the dangers from rising tides, soft mud, cliff edges and strong currents.
- Always follow instructions provided on warnings and information signs around the estuary.
- Some areas have legal restrictions on the number of dogs that one person can be responsible for, often a maximum of six dogs. Check [www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk](http://www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk) for more information.
- Never go into the water to rescue your dog, in an emergency dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.



### Be Bird Aware

The Exe is full of the wonderful sights and sounds of nature. We can all do our part in caring for this special place and allowing space for birds.

#### Q. What is disturbance?

A. Disturbance is any activity or noise that could change the behaviour of an animal (such as feeding, resting and breeding).

#### Q. What happens to the birds after they've been disturbed?

A. When birds are disturbed they stop feeding, or fly away. Losing energy can affect their overall condition and survival rate.

#### Q. Why can't the birds rest / feed somewhere else?

A. At high tide the birds need to rest to conserve energy. On the Exe, there is little ground above high water where they can rest undisturbed, Dawlish Warren is one of the few places they can go.

A. Birds are naturally drawn to feed in areas which are rich in nutritious food. By forcing birds away from these areas, they will be pushed to lower quality feeding grounds which can affect their survival.

**As an easy guide: if birds become alert, move away!**



## Watch Out For Wildlife

During winter, thousands of birds flock to the Exe to rest and feed on their long migratory journeys from places as far away as Siberia. Two areas within the estuary have been identified as vital areas for protected birds, identified as Wildlife Refuges. Eelgrass beds within these areas are a valuable food source for migrating birds. The Dawlish



**Dunlin**

Warren Refuge is also one of the most important high-tide roosts on the estuary.



**Black-bellied Brent Goose**

To make sure the site can be enjoyed by future generations please:

Refer to the map overleaf for areas you can walk your dog and areas to avoid for nature conservation reasons. Enjoy watching wildlife but keep a distance of 100m, to avoid putting birds to flight.

**Eelgrass**



**Little Egret**

- ✓ Avoid Wildlife Refuges where safe to do so.
- ✓ Keep noise to a minimum.
- ✓ Avoid eelgrass beds and areas where birds are feeding or roosting.
- ✓ Use dedicated access points and keep to paths.
- ✓ Do not park vehicles on the foreshore.
- ✓ Do not allow your dogs to chase birds, wildlife or livestock.

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

### HARBOUR AUTHORITY (River & Canal Office)

Office hours 01392 265791

Out of hours emergency 0845 3511060

### 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](mailto: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](http://www.exe-estuary.org) or contact the Exe Estuary Officer at [exeestua@devon.gov.uk](mailto:exeestua@devon.gov.uk).



### Join Devon Loves Dogs!

It's free to join and as a member you'll receive a FREE welcome pack and be the first to hear about events for you and your dog. [www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk](http://www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk)



SOUTH EAST DEVON HABITAT REGULATIONS PARTNERSHIP



# Exe Estuary: North Section



## Key

-  Wildlife Refuge
-  Parking
-  Slipway
-  Exe Estuary Trail
-  Nature Reserve

Parts of the trail are shared use and some paths are only recommended for walkers. For details of the full trail, see the Exe Explorer leaflet at [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org)

- ① Devon Wildlife Trust Old Sludge Beds Nature Reserve
- ② Devon Wildlife Trust Exe Reed Beds Nature Reserve
- ③ Exminster Marshes RSPB Nature Reserve
- ④ Bowling Green Marsh RSPB Nature Reserve
- ⑤ Exmouth Local Nature Reserve
- ⑥ Dawlish Warren National Nature Reserve
- ⑦ Maer Local Nature Reserve



## Exe Estuary: South Section

While all reasonable care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is up to date and accurate, no warranty is given that the information contained on this map is free from error or omission. Any reliance placed on such information shall be at the sole risk of the user. Please verify the accuracy of the information prior to using it.

### Key for Paw Prints



Dogs welcome off lead



Dogs on lead or seasonal restrictions



Sorry – no dogs



**Wildlife Refuges:** Dogs and their walkers are welcome on the Exe, but please avoid the Wildlife Refuges at all tidal states, where safe to do so. These are important feeding and high-tide roosting areas for protected birds and disturbance means that migrating birds may not survive. Birds naturally see dogs and humans as predators so please keep your distance, especially during winter.



**Exmouth Wildlife Refuge:** When accessing the shore from the Imperial Recreation Ground slipway, please turn left to avoid the Refuge. Avoid from mid-September to end of December.



**Dawlish Warren Wildlife Refuge:** There is a byelaw in place for statutory exclusion of dog walkers on the mudflats of the Nature Reserve all year round. Dogs are allowed on the beach between groyne 3 and 9, but restrictions are in place in all other areas (see Dawlish Warren Code for more information).

Please be aware that wildfowling takes place on the Exe during their permitted season, including within Exmouth Wildlife Refuge. This activity is agreed through consent with Natural England who grant lease agreements and regulated by Devon Wildfowling and Conservation Association.

More information can be found at [www.exewildliferefuge.org.uk](http://www.exewildliferefuge.org.uk)

### Where Can I Walk My Dog?



**Dawlish Countryside Park** is a 65 acre public open space with wild countryside walks. Opened in 2017, this offers an excellent exercise area for dogs off-lead and a free car park on site. The park can be found on the outskirts of Dawlish near EX7 0PA.



**The Exe Estuary Trail** provides a fantastic scenic route around the entire Exe Estuary for a range of users. Always keep dogs under effective control on a short lead and consider those who are wary or nervous around dogs. Remember to 'Share This Space' by being considerate of other users of the trail, more information can be found at [www.traveldevon.info/cycle/safe-cycling/share-this-space](http://www.traveldevon.info/cycle/safe-cycling/share-this-space)



**Exmouth Beach:** Dogs are welcome on beaches, but must avoid the 'Dog Restriction Area' from 1 May to 30 September. Dogs are welcome at Orcombe Point all year round.

For other dog-friendly areas, please visit [www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk](http://www.devonlovesdogs.co.uk)