

I-Spy: Inner Farne Wildlife – all year

Keep a good look out and you'll find lots of wildlife around here... Some of the creatures and plants in these photos are easy to spot while others are rarer visitors – the higher the number in the box the harder it is to see!



Sea campion

The Farnes are so exposed to the wind that no trees are able to survive on the islands. During the last ice age, 20,000 years ago, a glacier extended here from the mainland, depositing a layer of clay soil when it melted. Over 100 salt-loving plants grow in this, but with its pretty white flowers, sea campion is the most common.

1



Oystercatcher

These are the most common wader breeding on the Farnes, but you can spot them on the islands all year round. They have black and white feathers, bright red eyes, beak and legs. Their bill is specially blade-shaped to help them crack open cockles and mussels. They lay well-camouflaged eggs on the rocky shoreline.

5

Seals
The Farnes are home to one of the biggest grey seal colonies in the British Isles. They've been here for at least 800 years but were hunted for oil and skins for most of that time. Now they're protected and you can see the huge bulls, mottled cows and brownish pups peeking out of the water or huddling together lazily on rocks.

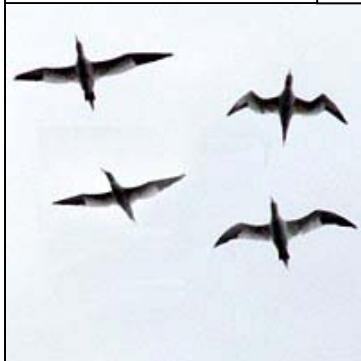
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Pied wagtail

This little bird can be found strutting about Inner Farne at any time of year. It breeds near the lighthouse and in the Chapel courtyard wall. It has a bold black cap and bib, and wagging tail. Young ones, (pictured here) are less boldly coloured than adults. **Bonus:** see it bounce through the sky, grabbing tiny insects for dinner.

4



Gannet

They're big and white, have long slender wings with black tips and a lemon yellow head. Youngsters are much darker for their first few years. Spot them gliding in a line over the sea, travelling to or from Bass Rock in Scotland, their closest nesting site. **Bonus:** if you spot a big splash as one dives into the water for fish.

8



Porpoise & dolphin

On a calm day with flat seas you might be lucky enough to catch sight of a fin or two in the waters between Inner Farne and the mainland. Harbour porpoise, also known as puffing pig, is most common, but bottle-nosed (left) or white-beaked dolphins, also swim through. **Bonus:** for seeing one leap out of the water!

9

Scarce fiddleneck
This yellow flowering plant can be found around the Pele Tower and Chapel on Inner Farne, but grows almost nowhere else in the UK. It comes from America and probably arrived as seeds in chicken feed when the lighthouse keepers grew hens. It can be a bit of a pest as it grows very densely and can swamp tern nests.

7



Butterflies & moths

The Farnes are home to many butterflies, like the red admiral, small tortoiseshell and peacock, best seen May to September. Over 180 moths have been spotted here too. Some make huge journeys from Europe and Africa to get here, while others breed locally. **Bonus:** if you find a painted lady basking in the sun (right).

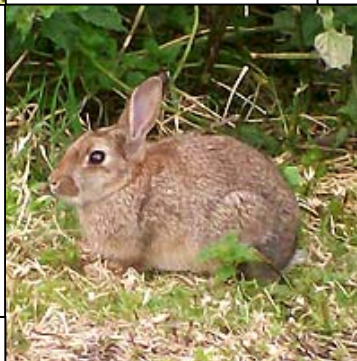
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Bluethroat

You would be really lucky to see this colourful little bird on Inner Farne – please tell a warden if you do! They're one of many rare, interesting visitors that pass through the islands once or twice a year, mainly in spring and autumn. They stop off for a rest on a long migration or get blown onto the Farnes after North Sea storms.

10



Wild rabbits

Found mainly on Inner Farne, these are the islands' only land mammals. They were brought over by lighthouse keepers about 150 years ago. Some people think that the rabbits dig burrows for the puffins but this is not true! For wild rabbits, they boast a strange variety of fur colours. **Bonus:** if you can spot a rare black bunny.

3

I-Spy: Inner Farne History

Inner Farne has been home to many sorts of people over the last few 1000 years – monks, soldiers, lighthouse keepers and wildlife wardens. See what clues you can spot of this history as you walk around the island...



St Cuthbert's chapel

1400 years ago the famous Northumbrian saint, Cuthbert, came to Inner Farne to scare away evil spirits and get close to God. He returned to die here in 687. Nothing survives from this era, but his little home or 'cell' was probably where the Pele Tower is now. The chapel is dedicated to St Cuthbert but actually dates from about 1300.



Old stone coffin

After Cuthbert, other hermits lived on Inner Farne. Many came from the Monastery of Durham, which eventually set up an outpost on the island, called the 'House of Farne'. Two monks and a few servants stayed here at any one time. This 600-year-old coffin was found in their graveyard. Notice its carved head-shape hole.

Intricate woodwork

After Henry VIII closed down all monasteries in the 16th century, Inner Farne was rented out to tenant farmers. By Victorian times St Cuthbert's Chapel was in ruins until a clergyman from Durham, Archdeacon Thorp, bought the island and restored it. He added fancy woodwork and stained glass. **Bonus:** for finding two wee mice.



Grace Darling

The most famous Farne Islands lighthouse keepers were the Darling family. In 1838, 23 year old Grace rowed out in a storm with her dad to save nine shipwreck survivors. She became a national hero and even Queen Victoria gave her a £50 reward. **Bonus:** if you can spot the two Grace Darling memorials in the chapel.



The Pele Tower

Constructed in 1500 to protect the Northumberland coast from a French invasion. A small garrison of soldiers was based here and at Bamburgh Castle. Before Inner Farne lighthouse was built, a beacon fire was lit each night on its roof to guide ships away from the island. Now the tower is home to National Trust wardens!



West Wideopens

See this island in front of you when walking towards the jetty. Its sister isle, East Wideopens, is just beyond. St Cuthbert is said to have banished demons to the Wideopens from Inner Farne, but these were probably the pre-Christian natives. A few axe and arrow-heads have been found on the Farnes by archaeologists.

Inner Farne Lighthouse

The first proper lighthouse was built on Inner Farne's highest point in 1809. Next door were three cottages for lighthouse keepers and their families. Only one remains, but the flat grassy picnic area marks out where the others sat. **Bonus:** if you spot the old white Trinity House boundary markers around the island.



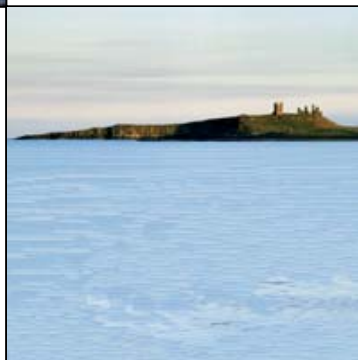
Longstone Lighthouse

The Outer Farne islands are the most dangerous for boats as many of their rock outcrops hide underwater at high tide. Grace Darling's family were the first lighthouse keepers to live in this bright red and white lighthouse which was built on Longstone in 1825. **Bonus:** if you see it flash – the light works all through the day and all night!



Lindisfarne

About 5 miles up the coast is Lindisfarne or 'Holy Island'. You can walk to it via a causeway from the mainland at low tide. During the 7th century, early Christians travelled from there around the British Isles on a mission to convert pagans. St Cuthbert was actually made Bishop of Lindisfarne before he returned to Inner Farne to die.



Dunstanburgh Castle

The Farne Islands are the most easterly point of the Great Whin Sill, a long thin strip of hard dark volcanic rock stretching through Northumberland. It pops up above the sea at Dunstanburgh too. Perched on a spectacular whin sill cliff outcrop, you can spot this 14th century castle's outline 10 miles down the coast on a clear day.