

# I-Spy: Inner Farne Breeding birds

1000s of seabirds come here every summer to breed, lay eggs and raise chicks... Some of the birds in these photos are easy to spot while others are more tricky – the higher the number in the box the harder it is to see!



## Puffin

Easy to spot with a bright orange bill and feet. They live most of the year in the sea and look a bit clumsy walking about on land. Almost half the Farnes breeding birds are puffins. Eggs are laid in burrows that they dig out with their beaks and feet.

**Bonus:** for seeing one with a mouth full of sand eels to feed a chick.

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## Arctic tern

The world's longest distance migrant, they fly to Antarctica for the winter. White with grey wings, red beak and legs, black cap and forked tail. They lay eggs near paths and on grassy banks around the jetties and courtyard, so take care not to tread on the chicks. Watch out! They often swoop down to protect their nests.

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## Sandwich tern

Bigger than the other terns with a black crest and feet, shorter tail and yellow-tipped black beak. Noisiest tern on the Farnes, the first to arrive (late Mar) and last to leave (early Sept). They tend to nest close together and mainly in one big colony in the centre of Inner Farne. Migrate to west coast of Africa for winter.

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## Common tern

Easy to confuse with Arctic tern but has a more orangy, black-tipped beak and longer legs. Can be even more scary when defending their young, as they attack from the sides and poop on people. **Bonus:** for not running away when they dive-bomb – just wave a hand slowly above your head to discourage them.

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## Shag

Look for emerald eyes, black wings with a green tint and a tuft on their head at the start of the breeding season. Shag nest on cliff tops, building up a big pile of seaweed, grass and anything else they find lying around. **Bonus:** if you see a chick feeding with its whole head stuffed into its parent's mouth.

2



## 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.

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## Guillemot & razorbill

Guillemot (right) are Britain's most common seabird. They lay eggs in big colonies on exposed rock ledges. Chicks are known as 'jumplings' as they jump off the cliff into the sea before they can fly, no matter how high the drop. Razorbills (two on left of photo) are closely-related, but smaller, with a white -striped, stocky bill.

6 & 7



## Eider or 'cuddy' duck

There's a local myth that St Cuthbert befriended eider ducks on Inner Farne and still protects them today. The females' brown feathers contrast with dramatic black, white and green males. Orphan chicks are often cared for by other mums, which is rare in the bird world. **Bonus:** if you see nests in odd places (like under benches)!

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## Ringed plover

Pretty little wader that lives on the shoreline among seaweed covered rocks and nests on the beach in Cuthbert's Cove. Look for a black and white stripe across the forehead, brown back, bright orange legs and beak. They are very brave and often fight off bigger birds or distract them with a pretend broken wing.

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## Kittiwake

You can often spot gulls living in towns or cities, but this dainty gull spends virtually all its time out at sea. Kittiwakes can be spotted raising their chicks on perilously tiny cliff ledges where they build nests from a cement-like mix of seaweed and muddy soil. **Bonus:** if you hear them call out... 'kittiwake, kittiwake'!

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# 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.



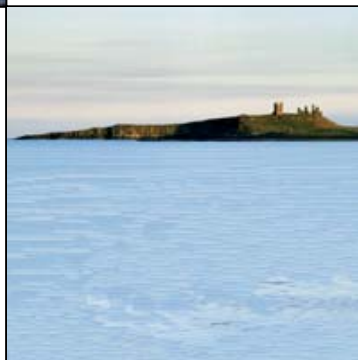
## Longstone Lighthouse

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> century castle's outline 10 miles down the coast on a clear day.