

Local Nature Reserves

Hart Warren Dunes

Hart Warren Dunes is also designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it has a solid geology of Permian Magnesian Limestone and is the only calcareous dune system of any significance in the British Isles.

The site is home to a wealth of wildlife and the supports an extensive area of species rich calcareous dune grassland. A high proportion of species rich grassland occurs in the northern and central sections of the golf course. Furthermore, within the central section there are a number of damp hollows which support regionally rare orchids, such as the burnt tip and pyramidal orchid.

Nineteen species of butterfly have been recorded at the site including the dingy skipper and the locally endemic Northern Brown Argus known locally as the Durham Brown Argus. The latter can be found in well drained unimproved areas of grassland where common rock rose, their larval foodplant occurs.

A colony of little tern, nest in the northern extremity of the site at Crimdon. The area is fenced annually to protect the nesting site by INCA and a host of partner organisations. They organise the wardening of the site and produce an annual report and press coverage to assist the conservation of this rare nesting bird. The birds arrive in April and nest on the foreshore in shallow scrapes just above the high tide line. Their return flight to West Africa usually begins towards the end of August.

The site contains a number of anti-invasion defences dating back to the Second World War. The remains consist of pill boxes, anti-tank obstacles and a battery and bombing decoy.

Hart Warren Dunes is located south of Crimdon Beck but has limited access due to the nature of the site. Access is possible either by approaching the site along the beach from Crimdon to the north or the Headland to the south. Alternatively, there is a Public Right of Way which accesses the area via the footbridge on the Hart to Haswell Walkway.

