

# sites to visit in the scottish borders - naturally!

The Scottish Borders has a diverse range of habitats and many excellent sites for watching wildlife. From the spectacular seabird colonies and carpets of wild flowers on the Berwickshire coast to heather covered moorland in the west supporting breeding wading birds and birds of prey. The River Tweed threads its way for 100 miles from the Tweedsmuir Hills south-west of Peebles to the North Sea at Berwick and each section of the river has its wildlife gems. In the western Borders there are many small lochs and wetlands which are easily overlooked but make up some of our best wildlife habitats and contain many of our rarer species. Scattered throughout the area are some fantastic private estates with mature mixed woodlands full of wildlife.

## Year of Natural Scotland

2013 is the Year of Natural Scotland which aims to promote Scotland's stunning natural beauty and biodiversity, and encourage everyone to enjoy our beautiful landscapes, wildlife and heritage responsibly.

This leaflet describes 13 sites selected to highlight the variety of habitats, animal and plant species to be found in the Scottish Borders.

To see an extensive list of wildlife sites in the Scottish Borders visit [www.scotborders.gov.uk/naturally](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/naturally)

**Site name:** Ettrick Marshes  
**Nearest Settlement:** Ettrickbridge  
**Main Habitats:** Floodplain woodlands, meadow, wetlands, river, conifer woodland.

**Wildlife Interest:** Borders Forest Trust have felled the conifer trees and planted native broadleaved trees to recreate the floodplain woodland. This wetland area and meadow is rich in wildlife, ideal habitat for reed bunting, grasshopper warbler, water rail and water vole, otter, dipper, grey wagtail and osprey are found along the river. red squirrel, roe deer, crossbill and siskin inhabit the neighbouring conifer woodland. Other notable species: goosander, treecreeper, sedge warbler, stoat, reed canarygrass, meadowsweet, marsh valerian. scotch argus butterfly, common frog.

**How to get there:** From Selkirk take the B7009 for 14 miles to Tushielaw, then follow the B709 for another 2 miles. Turn left into Honey Cottage caravan park and park at the riverside car park. There are waymarked paths through the site.

**Grid Reference:** NT289 156  
**Post Code:** TD7 5HU



**Site name:** Gunknowe Loch and Tweedbank Park  
**Nearest Settlement:** Tweedbank  
**Main Habitats:** Loch, river, woodlands, scrub, hedgerows, verges and gardens

**Wildlife Interest:** This urban area has been designed to include a lot of wooded areas, open grasslands and a small loch and with the River Tweed close by, this site attracts a lot of wildlife. Gunknowe loch attracts mute swans and a variety of gulls, along with tufted duck and mallard usually present. The wooded areas are home to many songbirds including long tailed tit, bullfinch, siskin, nuthatch, greater spotted woodpecker. Along the riverside dipper, oystercatcher and sand martin can often be seen. Other notable species: otter, badger, common sandpiper, heron, goldfinch. Waxwing are often present in winter.

**How to get there:** North of the A6091 between Galashiels and Melrose. Park at Gunknowe loch.

**Grid Reference:** NT517 345  
**Post Code:** TD1 3RP



**Site name:** The Hirsell Estate  
**Nearest Settlement:** Coldstream  
**Main Habitats:** Deciduous and mixed woodlands, loch, river, farmland

**Wildlife Interest:** The Hirsell estate has fine mature woodland with many oak and yew trees which attract nuthatch, great spotted woodpecker, jay, redwing and many other songbirds. The loch is an important wildfowl roost for teal, goosander, shoveler, whooper swan and grey geese. Other notable species: blackcap, little grebe, kingfisher, otter, noctule bat, daubenton's bat, roe deer.

**How to get there:** From the A698 on the western side of Coldstream, follow the estate drive to the car park and visitor centre.

**Grid Reference:** NT827 402  
**Post Code:** TD12 4LW



**Site name:** Lindean Loch and Whitlaw Mosses  
**Nearest Settlement:** Selkirk  
**Main Habitats:** Loch, fen, willow carr, grassland, woodland

**Wildlife Interest:** The grasslands and wetlands are rich in plant species and the open water contains a diverse mix of aquatic insects. At Lindean loch there is a platform where pond dipping can be done. The reeds and sedges provide cover for water rail, reed bunting and sedge warbler and otter frequent the area. Notable species include: northern marsh orchid, bogbean, greater spearwort, redpoll, tufted duck, dragonflies, scotch argus butterfly.

**How to get there:** From Selkirk head east (to St Boswells) on A699 for 3 miles/5 kms. Turn left and after 1/2 mile park at roadside car park at Lindean Loch. There is a path around Lindean Loch and a hide on the south side. Park here to visit Murder Moss, Beanrig Moss and Blackpool Moss.

**Grid Reference:** NT505 292  
**Post Code:** TD7 4QN



**Site name:** St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve (National Trust for Scotland property)  
**Nearest Settlement:** St Abbs  
**Main Habitats:** Cliffs, grassland, freshwater loch, rocky shore

**Wildlife Interest:** Famous for its accessible colonies of seabirds- guillemot, razorbill, kittiwake, fulmar. The grasslands are rich in wild flowers including drifts of thrift which support a variety of butterflies and the small loch and deciduous woodlands attract wildfowl and migrant birds. offshore, gannets, grey seals and occasionally whales and dolphins are seen. Other notable species: purple milk vetch, wild thyme, rockrose, northern brown argus butterfly, peregrine falcon, puffin, reed warbler.

**How to get there:** From Coldingham take the B6438 for 1 mile, car park and visitor centre at Northfield farm.

**Grid Reference:** NT912 692  
**Post Code:** TD14 5QF



**Site name:** Yetholm Loch (Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve)  
**Nearest Settlement:** Yetholm  
**Main Habitats:** Loch and pond, fen, willow carr, deciduous woodland

**Wildlife Interest:** Yetholm Loch is an important site for breeding and over-wintering wildfowl and a good site for observing otter. The path to the hide takes in a pond and woodland strip. There is willow carr and fen habitat at the southern end of the loch. Notable species include: kingfisher, osprey, reed bunting, gadwall, shelduck, noctule bat, blue tailed damselfly, cowbane.

**How to get there:** Situated 1 mile west of Yetholm. From Kelso take the B6436 for 5 miles. Turn right for Lochside, park at layby 250 metres on left. Follow path to the hide on the western side of the loch.

**Grid Reference:** NT802 279  
**Post Code:** TD5 8PD



**Site name:** Duns Castle Estate  
**Nearest Settlement:** Duns  
**Main Habitats:** Loch, parkland, grassland, mixed woodland

**Wildlife Interest:** The site consists of an artificial loch (Hen Poo) and pond (Mill dam) set in policy woodland in the grounds of Duns Castle. The site is managed as a Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve and is a Historic Garden and Designed Landscape (HGDL). In summer, mute swan, coot, moorhen, reed bunting and occasional visiting osprey on loch. Buzzard, sparrowhawk, great spotted woodpecker, redstart, spotted flycatcher and nuthatch in woodland. In winter goosander, goldeneye, tufted duck, teal on loch, flocks of siskin, crossbill, blue, great, coal and long-tailed tits in woodland. Notable species include yellow water lily, greater spearwort, common club-rush, bird cherry, bay willow, scarce moths, soprano pipistrelle bats.

**How to get there:** In town, just off A6112, park at top of Castle street (do not take vehicles beyond archway at lodge). For north end of reserve, take A6112 for 2 miles / 3kms then turn left on to B6365, then 1km in dip, there is a track on left with limited parking space. A tarmac road leads from Castle Street to north end of lake, suitable for wheelchairs. Waymarked walks within the estate (3-6km) mainly on level ground. Footpath by Castle Street entrance, up steep path to Duns law, iron-age hillfort for panoramic views of eastern Borders and Northumberland.

**Grid Reference:** NT775 545  
**Post Code:** TD11 3NW

**Site name:** Langholm - Newcastleton Hills  
**Nearest Settlement:** Newcastleton (Scottish Borders), Langholm (Dumfries and Galloway)  
**Main Habitats:** Blanket mire, heather moorland and acidic grassland, small areas of broad-leaved woodland associated with streams.

**Wildlife Interest:** Much of the moorland is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for hen harrier and SSSI for hen harrier, breeding waders, grouse and moorland habitat mosaics. Spring and early summer for curlew, golden plover, red grouse, whinchat, stonechat, meadow pipit and skylark, black grouse, hen harrier, merlin, peregrine, short-eared owl and raven. In winter peregrine, hen harrier, short-eared owl, red grouse. Species rich grassland and bryophyte rich springs and flushes in upland cleuchs. Site of Langholm Moor Demonstration Project to restore moorland habitats for nature conservation and an economically viable grouse moor [www.langholmproject.com](http://www.langholmproject.com)

**How to get there:** Unfenced minor road from Newcastleton-Langholm gives potentially good views of wildlife. Can make a circuit from Langholm north on A7, turning right at Fiddleton to Hermitage castle then back to Newcastleton on B6399. Vantage points between Tarras Lodge and Whita Hill and at County march (NY425873)

**Grid Reference:** NY425 873  
**Post Code:** TD9 0TX



**Site name:** Lauder Common  
**Nearest Settlement:** Lauder  
**Main Habitats:** Heather moorland, acid grassland  
**Wildlife Interest:** Extensive area of upland habitats with good access. Upland mosaic of heathland and acid grassland, wet heath and blanket bog, unimproved acid grassland, scree, gorse scrubs and haughland along Lauder burn. In spring, golden plover, curlew, snipe and lapwing, red grouse, meadow pipit, skylark, stonechat and wheatear. Black grouse formerly present. Occasional short-eared owl, dipper, grey wagtail, yellowhammer, linnet along Lauder burn. Notable moorland mosaic species include bog asphodel, thyme, marsh valerian, heath spotted orchid, sundew, cranberry and grass of parnassus.

**How to get there:** Access along B6363 Lauder-Stow road, several laybys. Network of paths crosses the Common. Access from road and at Burnmill car park.

**Grid Reference:** NT503 467  
**Post Code:** TD2 6RF

**Site name:** Bowhill Country Estate  
**Nearest Settlement:** Selkirk  
**Main Habitats:** Mature mixed woodland, conifer woodland, scrub, heather moor, river and loch

**Wildlife Interest:** The woodlands are home to roe deer, tawny owl, greater spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, goshawk, crossbill and siskin. The hills are managed for red grouse and attract curlew and cuckoo. Along the Yarrow Water otter, dipper and grey wagtail are present. The lochs contain heron, mute swan, moorhen and aquatic insects such as damselfly and water beetles.

**How to get there:** 3 miles / 5 kms west of Selkirk on the A708  
**Grid Reference:** NT425278  
**Post Code:** TD7 5ET

**Site name:** Wilton Lodge Park  
**Nearest Settlement:** Hawick  
**Main Habitats:** River, park, mature woodland. Wilton Lodge Park is one of the most picturesque town parks in Scotland.

**Wildlife Interest:** Along the tree lined river brown trout, heron, mallard, grey wagtail, dipper and in summer common sandpiper can be seen. Otter and kingfisher are sometimes present. The woodlands and trees within the park are home to greater spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, treecreeper, long tailed tit, goldcrest and goldfinch. In the summer swift fly overhead. Specimen trees include oak, horse chestnut, lime, poplar, yew, weeping ash, copper beech, red norway maple.

**How to get there:** On the north side of the River Teviot at the west side of Hawick. Park at the Common Haugh car park where the A7 crosses the River Teviot

**Grid Reference:** NT 491142  
**Post Code:** TD9 7JL



**Site name:** Kailzie Gardens  
**Nearest Settlement:** Peebles  
**Main Habitats:** River, pond, mixed woodland, unimproved grasslands, gardens. There is an entrance charge. Open from the end of March to end of October, 11am - 5.30pm.

**Wildlife Interest:** Live CCTV pictures of nesting osprey and other birds. Along the river kingfisher, goosander, heron, dipper, otter and bats are present. Grasslands attract brown hare lapwing, oystercatcher, redshank. The woodlands contain buzzard, sparrowhawk, woodcock, barn owl, green woodpecker, mistle thrush, garden warbler, bullfinch, roe deer and red squirrel. The gardens, also, contain the oldest European larch in Scotland - planted in 1725.

**How to get there:** On the south side of the River Tweed, 2½ miles / 4 kms east of Peebles on the B7062  
**Grid Reference:** NT 278388  
**Post Code:** EH45 9HT

**Site name:** Dawyck Botanic Gardens  
**Nearest Settlement:** Stobo  
**Main Habitats:** Mature mixed woodland, garden and parkland. The gardens are managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. There is an entrance charge. Open 1st February to 30 November

**Wildlife Interest:** The gardens have a fantastic collection of trees and shrubs making this site one of Britain's finest arboreta with some of the country's tallest trees. There is a Cryptogamie Reserve for non flowering plants – mosses, fungi, lichens. Resident birds include green woodpecker, greater spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, treecreeper, sparrowhawk, jay and crossbill. In late spring when the rhododendrons and azaleas are in flower the resident birds are joined by redstart, blackcap and spotted flycatcher.

**How to get there:** On the south side of the River Tweed between Stobo and Broughton, 8 miles / 13 kms south-west of Peebles  
**Grid Reference:** NT 166351  
**Post Code:** EH45 9JU

For visitor information throughout the Scottish Borders see [www.visitscottishborders.com](http://www.visitscottishborders.com)

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Your heritage

