



# LIFE WADER

October 2021- December 2026

## Water and Disturbance Environmental Restoration on the Northumbrian coast

LIFE WADER is a five-year project that will improve the condition of the river, intertidal and marine habitats of the Northumberland Coast and Tweed catchment for the species that depend on them. The project will focus on four key Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) extending along the Northumberland Coast and including the Tweed catchment in the Scottish borders. The area also incorporates Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve (NNR).

### Key Issues

- ♂ **Water Quality** - Elevated levels of nitrates and phosphates are negatively impacting water quality, and affecting fresh water, coastal and marine habitats.
- ♂ **Algae** - Excessive (macro)algae growth is smothering intertidal areas (including seagrass) and impacting food availability for internationally important wading and waterfowl birds.
- ♂ **Recreation** - Growing recreational and visitor pressure - especially on the coast - is causing damage to habitats and disturbing sensitive bird species.
- ♂ **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)** - Arrival of new INNS and persistence of established species threaten native species and sensitive habitats in riparian, coastal and marine areas.
- ♂ **Education** - A need to raise awareness of the inter-connectivity between the river, coastal and marine habitats to aid long-term conservation efforts.



LIFE WADER project area (orange) including the Tweed catchment and Northumberland coast



# What will this project achieve?

The LIFE WADER project aims to improve more than 49,000 hectares of habitat as well as improving water quality within the River Tweed catchment, Tweed Estuary and the Northumberland Coast. This will be achieved through working with stakeholders, including farmers and land managers, by:



- Delivering river restoration on the River Till / Breamish.
- Creating new reed beds and delivering demonstration projects to address pollution from agriculture, and other sources, by reducing the level of nutrients entering the marine environment.
- Planting trees and installing fencing along river corridors to improve the riparian zone and reduce risk of diffuse pollution.
- Sympathetically removing opportunistic (macro)algae (which is smothering intertidal habitats) and identifying different ways the removed material can be used.
- Reducing disturbance of birds, mammals, and sensitive habitats by assessing how many visitors an individual site can tolerate; and identifying pressure points and enhancing visitor management through an increase in the use of seasonal wardens, interpretation, revised bylaws and the creation of wildlife refuges.
- Improving the control of INNS through better surveillance, new surveying techniques, improved detection and subsequent removal across freshwater, marine and dune land habitats, using non-chemical controls.
- Demonstrating best practice to business, policy makers and land managers locally and across Europe.
- Increasing awareness of the importance and sensitivity/vulnerability of sites and their designated features, such as the bird assemblages, amongst the many visitors to the project area.
- Inspiring users, volunteers, stakeholders, businesses and communities about the need for more sustainable management within the project area.
- Improving the ecological condition of SACs and SPAs which will increase their resistance and resilience to climate change impacts.

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[www.tweedforum.org/our-work/life-wader/](http://www.tweedforum.org/our-work/life-wader/)

 [@Lifewader](https://twitter.com/Lifewader)

LIFE WADER (LIFE20/NAT/UK/00277) has received funding from the Life Programme which is the European Union's funding instrument for the environment. Funding is awarded for best practice, innovation and demonstration projects that contribute to the objectives of Natura 2000

Natura 2000: The project includes 4 Special Conservation Areas and 2 Special Protection Areas which are part of Natura 2000- a network of the very best areas for wildlife across Europe. All Natura 2000 sites have special protection under European and UK laws.



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