

**In March 2000, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust completed the purchase of Flamborough Cliffs Nature Reserve.**

The nature reserve stretches for a total of 1.5 miles either side of North Landing, west beyond Thornwick Bay and east as far as Breil Nook (or Newk). The site rises from the caves at the base of the cliffs, up the cliff face and extends 500 metres inland, covering an area of 36.23 hectares.

The nature reserve lies within the Flamborough Head Site of Special Scientific Interest, it is part of a European Union Special Protection Area and is a Special Area for Conservation and it lies within the Flamborough Head Heritage Coast.

In spring, the cliff tops are carpeted by pink thrift, while the surrounding fields contain many typical chalk grassland flowers such as the orange-yellow bird's-foot trefoil. However, the main conservation interest lies with the thousands of seabirds which nest on the cliffs. From April to July the cliffs are packed with birds, but they disperse by August. Only a few fulmars remain.

The commonest seabirds are kittiwakes and guillemots, with smaller but important numbers of fulmar, herring

gull, razorbill and puffin. A small number of shags nest near the base of the cliffs, while the similar-looking cormorant can be seen. The spectacular gannet can be seen offshore as it flies back and forth to the large colony at Bempton Cliffs, further north.

At low tide, bare rocks exposed on the shoreline attract small numbers of wildfowl and waders including oystercatchers, turnstones and redshanks. During late summer and autumn the area can be good for terns, skuas and shearwaters, particularly during spells of onshore winds, when they are pushed closer to the coast.

The cliff top fields support breeding skylarks, meadow pipits and corn buntings, birds which have been declining in recent years throughout the UK due to agricultural intensification. In autumn and winter these fields can host large numbers of larks, pipits, finches and buntings, including species such as Lapland bunting. These in turn attract predators including merlins and short-eared owls.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust manages the fields to improve them for these birds and the wide range of plants that thrive in them.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a local charity working to protect and conserve Yorkshire's wild places for all to enjoy.

We care for over 95 nature reserves throughout the county and run lots of events so that everyone can get out and experience wild Yorkshire for themselves.

It is thanks to the support of our members, volunteers and supporters that we are able to continue with this work.

*Why not join us?*

Joining is easy! For a monthly donation you can support Flamborough Cliffs and all the other sites the Trust cares. Visit [ywt.org.uk](http://ywt.org.uk) for details.



**Flamborough Cliffs Nature Reserve**

**Nearest postcode:** YO15 1BJ

**Grid reference:** TA239720

**Reserve size:** 36.23 hectares

**Public transport:** Regular bus services from Bridlington to Flamborough village; closest train station is at Bridlington.

**Directions:** From Flamborough village follow the B1265 signposted for North Landing. The road terminates above the North Landing with a car park on the left. The YWT Living Seas Centre is nearby at South Landing a short walk from the village centre.



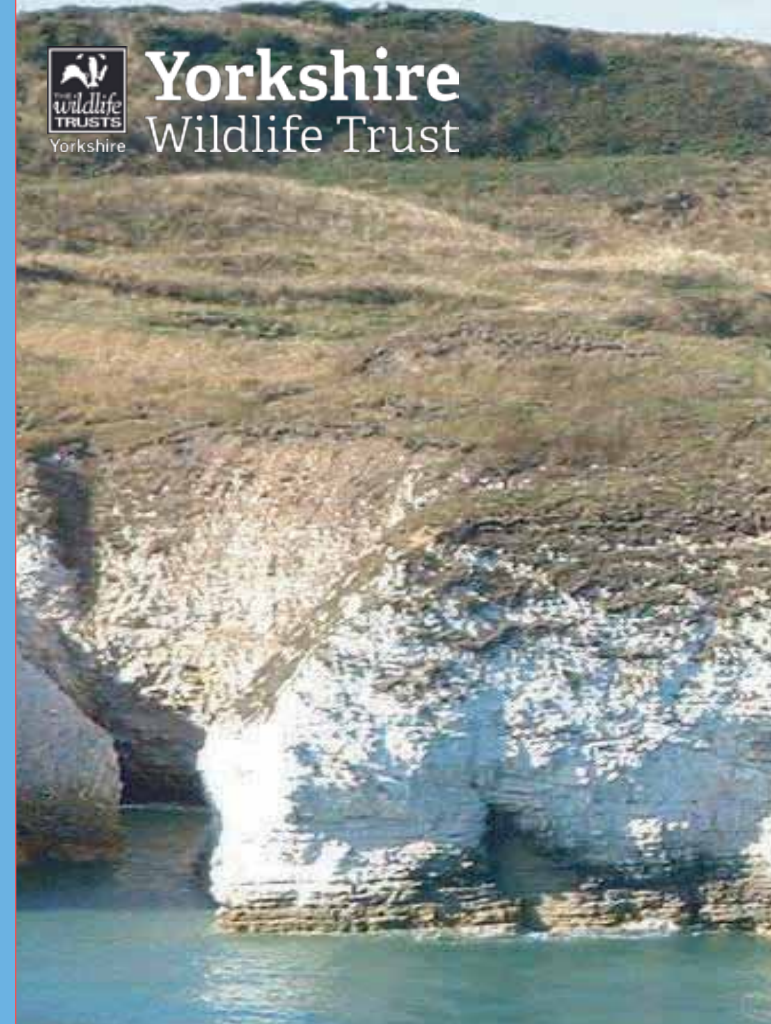
Scan me to visit the  
Flamborough Cliffs webpage



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**Photos:** Thanks to Rodney Graham (cliffs), Martin Batt (shag, puffin), Richard Shucksmith (guillemots, kittiwake), Gillian Day (Herring gull), George Stoyle (fulmar), Wildstock (razorbill).



# Yorkshire Wildlife Trust



## Flamborough Cliffs

Nature Reserve

Seabird guide



Love Yorkshire, Love Wildlife

# Flamborough Cliffs: Seabird City!

This is a guide to the main eight species of seabird which nest on Flamborough Headland. All of these can be seen easily between April and July although gannets do not breed here. They nest further north at Bempton Cliffs.

## **Gannet, *Morus bassanus***

(87-100cm, wings 165-180cm)  
Body and wings white, wingtips black, head yellow. Immatures start brown and progress over several years to adult plumage. Feeds on fish. First breeds at 5 years old, nesting on broadest ledges. Nest made of seaweed,

netting and other materials. One egg, pale blue to white with brown/black staining. Incubation 42-46 days, fledging 84-92 days. Young white when downy, chocolate brown with white speckling when ready to fledge. Winters at sea but seen at cliffs January to October.



## **Shag**

### *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

(65-80cm, wings 90-105cm)  
Body and head green-black, no white markings, but a small tuft at the top of the head and a yellow patch at the bill-base. Flies low over the sea, unlike the larger cormorant, which flies high over the water. Feeds on fish. First breeds at 4 years of age. Nest is a heap of seaweed just above the high water mark in small caves. 1-6 eggs, pale blue. Incubation 30-31 days, fledging 48-58 days. Young are brown with pale bellies.

Winters at sea close to cliffs.

## **Puffin, *Fratercula arctica***

(26-29cm, wings 47-63cm)  
Back and wings black, belly and face white, feet orange, beak parrot-like with red, yellow and blue patches. Penguin-like when standing. Feeds on fish. First breeds at 5 years of age, nesting in a bare scrape in holes in cliffs or burrows where soft soil allows excavation. One egg, white with purple markings. Incubation 36-45 days, fledging 38-60 days. Young are black with pale bellies. Winters in the North Sea and North Atlantic.



## **Guillemot, *Uria aalge***

(38-41cm, wings 64-70cm)  
Back and wings dark chocolate brown, belly white, beak long, thin and pointed. Some 'bridled' birds have a white eyering. Penguin-like when standing. Feeds on fish. First breeds at 5 years of age. No nest, egg is incubated for 28-37

days on webs of adult's feet as they stand in rows on narrowest of cliff ledges. The single egg is blue or green with black markings and pointed at one end to spin if nudged. Fledging 30 days, but leaves cliffs after 20 days. Young are dark brown with pale bellies. Winters in the North Sea and North Atlantic.



## **Razorbill, *Alca torda***

(37-39cm, wings 63-68 cm)  
Back and wings jet-black, belly white, beak deep and striped white, vertically flattened and with a bright yellow mouth. Feeds on fish. Egg incubated for 25-36 days, on bare rock often in a crevice. Fledging 30 days, but leaves cliffs after 18 days. Young black with pale bellies. Winters in North Sea/Atlantic.

## **Fulmar, *Fulmarus glacialis***

(45-50cm, wings 110-112cm)  
Body and head white, wings blotchy grey-brown held very stiff and straight in flight. Feeds on squid, fish, offal and carrion. Often scavenges behind fishing boats. First breeds at 6-12 years of age. Nest is in a scrape on the bare rock. One white egg, incubated for 47-53 days. Fledging 41-57 days. Young grey and downy, grey and white when ready to fledge. Winters in the North Sea and regularly seen from the cliffs all year.



## **Kittiwake, *Rissa tridactyla***

(38-40cm, wings 95-120cm)  
Small, elegant gull with white head, tail and body, grey wings with 'dipped-in-ink' black tips, black legs and yellow beak. Feeds on fish and marine invertebrates. Nest is a cup of mud and grass. Two eggs, yellowish with dark speckles, incubated for 25-32 days. Young fledge after 33-54 days and are grey with a black collar and black 'w' along wings. Winters out at sea.

## **Herring gull**

### *Larus argentatus*

(56-67cm, wings 138-158cm)  
Large gull with white head and body, grey wings with black and white wingtips, pink legs, heavy yellow beak with red spot. Feeds on a wide-variety of scavenged and predated items. First breeds at 3 to 7 years, nests at the top of the cliffs in the grass. Lays 2-3 olive brown eggs with black blotches, incubated for 28-30 days, fledged 35-40 days. Young pale brown with dark markings. Winters mainly inland.

