Coastal Guardians

The Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership (SLLP) and Action for Biodiversity are giving you the opportunity to learn about this rich coastal life and understand how species can be cared for and conserved for the future. You can help us care for this amazing place through a range of activities, including shore exploration, moth mornings, mollusc marathons, bird watching, talking to and learning from the experts. It’s a chance to get involved, help your local wildlife, meet people and have fun!

If you are interested please contact us to find out how you can become a guardian of your coast:
Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership,
No.1 The Square,
Portaferry,
County Down,
BT22 1LW
028 4272 8886
info@strangfordlough.org

Working with the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) we have produced two species guides on local shore species. CEDaR is the local records centre for Northern Ireland’s biodiversity and geodiversity. Find out more about them on www.habitas.org.uk or add to their database by emailing – cedar.info@nmni.com.

When on the shore

- Ensure any vehicles are parked out of the way of other traffic and take care not to block farm access.
- Stay aware of the tides and currents, tide tables are available online through our website.
- When searching for marine animals replace vegetation and stones that you look under, many animals hide under these for their survival.
- Take photographs of anything you find interesting instead of taking them home; feel free to share them with us.
- If you take shells home, make sure they are empty.
- Be careful on rocks, they may be slippery, and you could damage some habitats. Avoid cliff edges as they may be unstable. Mud can be deep and dangerous.
- Take your litter home, it can be dangerous to people and wildlife.
- Keep a safe distance from wildlife when walking on the shore so as not to disturb any species.
- If you encounter any activities that you feel are harmful to wildlife or their habitat please contact the SLLP office.

More Wildlife Information
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
www.wwt.org.uk
www.doeni.gov.uk
www.nmni.com/cedar
www.actionforbiodiversity.eu

Explore the Coast
be a Coastal Guardian

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The Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership is supported by the Department of the Environment, Ards Borough Council and Down District Council.

The rise and fall of the tides expose the animals and plants to the air. This regular pattern of immersion under water creates sharply designed areas or zones. Species live in different zones depending on their ability to survive different levels of tide.

The Intertidal Shore

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COAST GUIDE
Rocky and Boulder Shores

Rocks exposed by thousands of years of erosion occur all over Co. Down. Exposed rocky shores receive the greatest amount of wave action, such as Ballyquintin, Killard or St. John’s Point. Sheltered rocky shores, like Whiterock, are tucked away from the full force of wind and waves. Rocky shores are the best way to see the distinct shore zones. The boulders that lie on the lower shore are often home to a very diverse range of species. Upper surfaces usually have barnacles, limpets and mussels. Underneath lie sea squirts, anemones, and crabs. Many kinds of seaweed provide them with shelter and prevent drying out.

Mud Flats

Mud flats have minimal wave action and provide an area for sea grasses, worms and shellfish. Examples include Killough Bay and the southern end of Strangford Lough, within which great estuaries exist. Huge flocks of birds such as Pale-Bellied Brent Geese, that come here every year from Arctic Canada.

Coastal Grasslands

Great examples at Ballyquintin and Killard Point, packed with wild flowers in early summer.

There are many other kinds of habitats that can be discovered. These and other habitats are waiting for you to explore.

Sandy Shore

Sand is derived from the erosion of rock, coral, shells and skeletons of other animals. Beaches can be thought of as shock absorbers that protect the coastline, sea cliffs or dunes from direct wave attack. Think of where you will find flat sandy beaches on the County Down coast. Good examples include Ballyhornan or Tyrella.

Dunes are mounds or hills of sand which have been heaped up by wind action. Marram and other grasses are vital to stabilising them. The sand dunes at Tyrella and Cloughhey are a wonderful example of this habitat - rich in wild flowers and butterflies.