

Why Long Rock is so special

Long Rock has been designated part of the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Natural England, the government's advisor on the natural environment. SSSIs are home to some of our rarest wildlife and are protected by law. Important populations of birds gather on the shingle beach at Long Rock to feed and breed and the grasslands support rare plants and insects. The brook has a small population of water vole – a species suffering a major national decline.

Please respect this fragile environment and the creatures that rely on it by staying on the footpaths and preventing your dogs from roaming across the site. Kite surfers should avoid crossing the shingle areas.



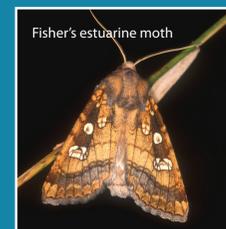
Please do not disturb our wildlife



Brent Goose



Ringed Plover



Fisher's estuarine moth

The shingle beach may look lifeless but it is actually home to a host of specialist wildlife. Shingle beaches form where pebbles are deposited by wave action. Plants and animals living on the shingle must be adapted to cope with a shifting environment and limited soil; look out for the yellow horned-poppy, a specialist of shingle habitats. Further inland you may know wild carrot flowers. These are the predecessors to our garden carrots. If you crush the leaves you can smell their carrot aroma. A much rarer plant that grows here is Hogs Fennel, a member of the carrot family. It grows at only a few locations in Britain and supports the equally rare Fisher's estuarine moth. The grassland also supports a variety of birds including skylark, meadow pipit and reed bunting, all of which breed here.

Some of our most rapidly declining birds such as the ringed plover nest on shingle beaches; their eggs are perfectly camouflaged to make them invisible to predators. Disturbance by people and dogs can lead to birds abandoning nests and chicks. We also have many birds arriving on our shores in the autumn from the Arctic that need to feed and rest on the isolated headland of the shingle beach. The brent goose, regularly seen at Long Rock, travels approximately 2,500 miles, all the way from Siberia. Disturbance forces birds to move elsewhere in search of food, using up vital resources which help them survive the winter.

Visit www.kentos.org.uk for more information on birds seen at Long Rock.

**For more information contact:
Canterbury City Council's Countryside
Section on 01227 862 486**

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Southern
Water

