

# Dynamic Dunescapes



## What's the project?

Dynamic Dunescapes is restoring sand dunes across England and Wales for the benefit of wildlife, people and communities, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the EU LIFE Programme. Project partners are Natural England, Plantlife, National Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Cumbria Wildlife Trust.



The coastal dunes of England and Wales are internationally important habitats for wildlife, listed as one of the most threatened environments in Europe for biodiversity loss. Dunes are a sanctuary for rare species like orchids, sand lizards and natterjack toads. However, dunes are suffering from widespread over-stabilisation, invasive species, habitat loss, fragmentation and vegetation growth due to change in land use and grazing regimes, loss of rabbit populations and climate change. This is putting wildlife at risk.

Healthy sand dunes need to be free to move and be dynamic. Many species need areas of open sand to thrive, so this project will bring life back to the dunes by restoring and creating the habitat types that specialised dune wildlife need.

## Eskmeals dunes are important

Formed over 5,000 years ago, the dunes at Eskmeals are important for a diverse range of wildflowers and rare and protected natterjack toads. The estuary provides for winged plover, curlew and goldeneye. Skylarks and wheatear can be spotted amongst the grasslands and dune heath - a habitat becoming ever rare in Cumbria. Butterflies including dark green fritillary and gatekeepers are found here too.

## Why are Eskmeals dunes at risk?

Eskmeals dunes have become stabilised and over-grown. Sea buckthorn, native only to the east coast, has outcompeted rare and specialised plants, reducing habitat and species diversity here, taking over the dune systems. Overtime, vegetation growth has altered the conditions of ponds. Natterjack toads require very specific conditions for successful breeding and this has put them at risk.



## What are we doing to help Eskmeals?

The conservation team will be working to:

- Carefully remove sea buckthorn and *Rosa rugosa*, an invasive species, to allow specialised species to flourish
- Create and restore ponds as part of ongoing work to allow home for breeding natterjack toads
- Maintain and improve access for you to enjoy
- Grazing by shorthorn cattle will continue to help keep grass swards short for wildflowers to flourish, habitat for ground nesting birds and keep open patches of bare sand for hibernating natterjacks



We work with skilled local and national experts, and involve schools and local groups, volunteers and visitors of all ages and abilities to help rejuvenate our dunes.

Dynamic Dunescapes work here is led by Natural England, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and National Trust.

Find out more, explore our events, volunteering opportunities and sign up to our newsletter:

[dynamicdunescapes.co.uk](https://dynamicdunescapes.co.uk)

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