

## Why do the north Kent estuaries need protecting?

Each winter, the continuous swathe of coastal habitat between Gravesend and Whitstable plays home to thousands of wading birds and waterfowl from as far afield as Greenland, Scandinavia and the Arctic.

- 250,000 birds find shelter here during the winter;
- 16,000 hectares are home for many rare species.

These are fragile habitats, protected by international and European designations owing to their importance for wildlife.

Visitors to the coast may unintentionally cause disturbance to wildlife, this leaflet shows some of the birds you can see in the winter and how you can avoid disturbing them, and enjoy the north Kent estuaries.

## Why do the birds need your help?

The cold and wet weather can make life tough for these birds but when they are disturbed they can stop feeding, or may even fly away, causing them to waste valuable energy.

They need to spend as much time as possible feeding and conserving their energy to ensure they can make the long flight back to their breeding grounds in the spring.

## How you can help

By following our good behaviour guides you can help to avoid disturbing these internationally important birds and the fragile environment that is so essential to their survival.

## Who are we?

Bird Wise is a partnership between local authorities and conservation organisations in north Kent. Our objective is to ensure that people are able to enjoy the north Kent coastal areas whilst protecting the birds and wildlife that depend on the Thames, Medway and Swale estuaries.



## To find out more

[www.birdwise.org.uk](http://www.birdwise.org.uk)

Email: [birdwise@medway.gov.uk](mailto:birdwise@medway.gov.uk)

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## How you can help to protect the north Kent marshes





Black Tailed Godwit



Dunlin



Brent Goose



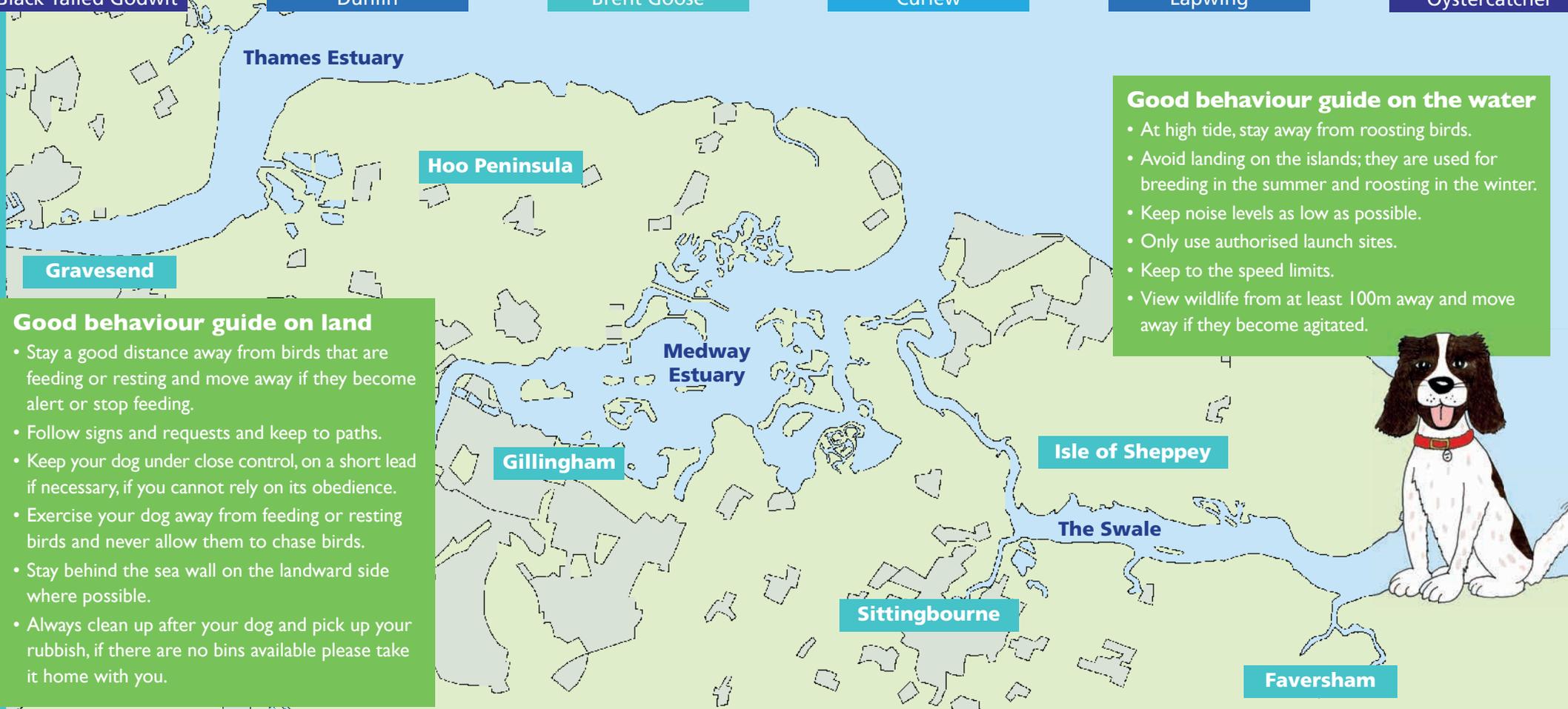
Curlew



Lapwing



Oystercatcher



**Good behaviour guide on land**

- Stay a good distance away from birds that are feeding or resting and move away if they become alert or stop feeding.
- Follow signs and requests and keep to paths.
- Keep your dog under close control, on a short lead if necessary, if you cannot rely on its obedience.
- Exercise your dog away from feeding or resting birds and never allow them to chase birds.
- Stay behind the sea wall on the landward side where possible.
- Always clean up after your dog and pick up your rubbish, if there are no bins available please take it home with you.

**Good behaviour guide on the water**

- At high tide, stay away from roosting birds.
- Avoid landing on the islands; they are used for breeding in the summer and roosting in the winter.
- Keep noise levels as low as possible.
- Only use authorised launch sites.
- Keep to the speed limits.
- View wildlife from at least 100m away and move away if they become agitated.



Ringed Plover



Grey Plover



Shelduck



Wigeon



Turnstone



Redshank