

THE PAST

The first settlers on Foulness in relatively modern times were the Romano-British circa AD 180-280. The short period was almost certainly due to the encroachment of the sea.

It was not until after 1000 AD that Foulness would again have been suitable for habitation. The first permanent dwellings began to appear in the sixteenth century. Until then the Island was populated by a few fishermen and shepherds living in humble buildings.

The first seawalls were probably built in the 12th - 13th century AD. Since the early 15th century there have been seven stages of land reclamation, the last being in 1833 AD, bringing the Island to its current shape and size.

For your further information:

- *Visit* - The Conservation Room attached to the George and Dragon public house. Foulness Preservation and Conservation Society Chairman Peter Carr 01702-217836
- *Read* - 'Foulness' by J R Smith, Essex Record Office Publications
- 'Islands of Essex' by Ian Yearsley, Ian Henry Publications
- 'The Great Tide' by Hilda Grieve, Essex County Council

WILDLIFE

From shoreline to farmland, the Island has a rich diversity of habitats.

Acres of mud on the Maplin Sands bring thousands of Waders in winter, with the Dark Bellied Brent Geese.

Cockle shell banks and Saltings give nesting sites for Terns, Oystercatchers and Ringed Plover. Small flocks of Snow Buntings find food in winter.

Ponds and Wet Marshland give life to Grass Snakes, Frogs, Toads and Lizards. Damsel and Dragonflies swoop about in summer. Redshank, Lapwing, Ducks and Avocets bring up their broods on abundant insect life.

Rough Grassland provides home to Short-tailed Voles. They in turn are a food source for Barn Owls and Kestrels. In winter the same areas are hunted by Merlin and Short-Eared Owls

Acres of thorn scrub give food, shelter and nesting sites to residents and summer visitors alike. Warblers of several species stay and breed. Redwing and Fieldfare obtain food from the berries in winter.

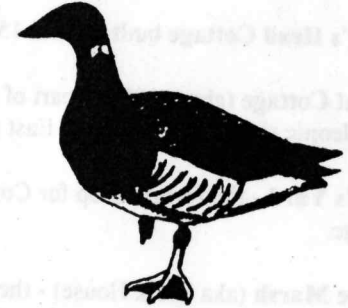
Grazed grassland and Hay meadows with our wild flowers give nectar for insects, a food source for the caterpillars of both Moths and Butterflies. Skylarks, Meadow Pipits and Yellow Wagtails nest.

Fertile farmland provides habitat to Hares and the inevitable Rabbit. They bring Foxes, Stoats and Weasels

Pockets of Woodland give safe haven to small birds in winter and nest sites for Grey Heron and Sparrowhawk. Long-eared Owls and Woodcock find shelter in winter.

Foulness means 'Promontory of Birds'. Our bio-diversity and lack of disturbance keeps it that way.

Foulness Island



The island is one of a group of six islands bordered by the Thames Estuary to the south, the River Crouch to the north and the North Sea to the east.

Foulness measures seven miles by five and has an acreage of between 6 and 7 thousand. It is the largest of the Essex islands.

Before the great flood of 1953 about 400 people lived here. Now about half that number are residents.

The island is now almost entirely owned by the MoD and there is limited access to the public. This means that the island has a unique character.

Guarded by the MoD police force, the island has a relaxed pace, considering the hectic holiday resort of Southend is only 10 miles away.

In the midst of military activity, the wildlife is protected from the pressures of the 'leisure industry'. Consequently this island's wildlife thrives and seems to go against national trends of declining species.

Enjoy your visit to the island but remember it is a military range and can be dangerous. **Do not wander about unescorted.**

SOME OF THE BUILDINGS

- 1 **King's Head Cottage** built around 1560-70.
- 2 **Signal Cottage** (about 1800) - part of the Napoleonic signal system on the East Coast
- 3 **Bird's Yard** - the former shop for Courtend village.
- 4 **Ridge Marsh** (aka Brick House) - the first brick built house on Foulness, about 1700, but on the site of an earlier dwelling
- 5 **Nasewick** - a 17th/18th century farm house.
- 6 **Church of England School** - 1846- no longer used.
- 7 **Church** - 1852 - on the site of an earlier church, and dedicated to St Mary the Virgin.
- 8 **Rectory**, built 1846.
- 9 **George & Dragon** - 18th century public house. The garden provided the arena for bare fist fighting contests.
- 10 **Old Hall Farm** - the modern building stands on the site of an earlier manor house.
- 11 **Lodge Farm** - 18th century.
- 12 **Tree Farm** - Dutch style, built around 1687/8 and extended in modern times.

