

# North Devon



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Featuring not only the largest sand dune system in Europe – the Braunton Burrows – but plenty more besides. From the National Parks of Dartmoor and Exmoor, along meandering rivers, through stunning woodlands and past historic coastal communities, across a World Surfing Reserve then onwards to Lundy Island and the diverse marine environment that surrounds it. This is just a snapshot of the North Devon Biosphere – a unique collection of ecosystems spanning land and sea.

## What makes this UNESCO Designation special?

North Devon Biosphere incorporates one of the most iconic dune systems in the northern hemisphere that hosts two endemic species, and it was a key research site that determined the early understanding of dune morphology and ecology. The buffer zone includes the Taw Torridge SSSI which receives thousands of overwintering wildfowl on key migration routes through western Europe.

The upland areas of Dartmoor and Exmoor are some of the largest peat bogs in southern England. The woodlands in the areas also represent good examples of Atlantic oak woodland (AKA temperate rainforest) each hosting special lower plant communities special to the region.

The special culm grasslands are a feature of the area and represent the largest remnants of purple moor grass and rush pasture in western Europe. In the marine areas, the reserve around Lundy is one of the marine biodiversity hotspots in the UK with iconic species such as the sunset cup coral.

The special morphology of the sea bed and combination of large beaches and reefs has meant that the area has consistently good waves for surfing leading to the area's recognition as the UK's first World Surfing Reserve.

The deep agricultural traditions in the area have contributed to the maintenance of these habitats.

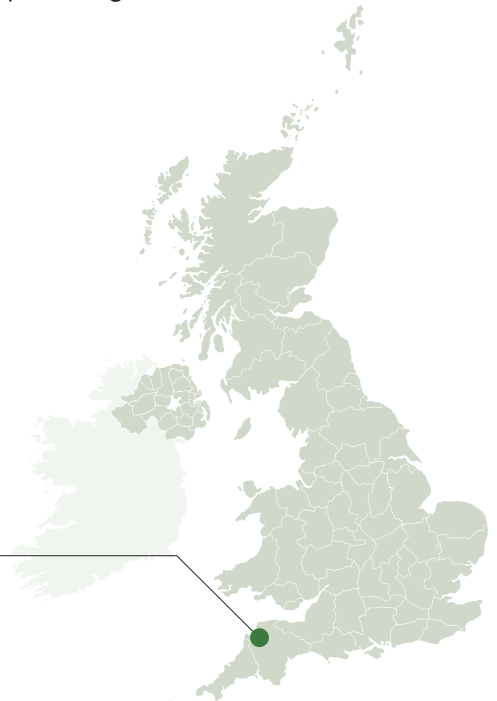
Artefacts from the Bronze Age and several Iron-Age hillforts contribute to the cultural heritage of the area, whilst a strong maritime heritage prevails due to the combined rivers of Taw and Torridge Rivers, giving rise to historic ports and picturesque villages. The legacy of World War II can be found all over the landscape including the important D-Day practice grounds.



## Biosphere Reserves

### North Devon

County: **Devon**



 [northdevonbiosphere.org.uk](http://northdevonbiosphere.org.uk)  
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