



Dogs must be on leads on the Ayres National Nature Reserve during the bird nesting season – reminder

Dogs must be on leads, no more than 3 metres long, on the Ayres National Nature Reserve (NNR) from 1st April to the 31st July 2024 to comply with the Ayres NNR Byelaws. Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to £5,000.

The Ayres NNR is an important refuge for ground nesting birds that have undergone declines in their abundance and retractions in their range across the Isle of Man. Curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher, ringed plover, little tern, Arctic tern, skylark and meadow pipit all lay their eggs on the ground at the Ayres NNR. When wader and tern chick's hatch out they move away from their nests and wander freely under the watchful eye of their parents. It can be up to 5 weeks before these chicks are able to fly and during this time they are extremely vulnerable.

The restrictions to dog walkers apply to the heathland and the beach and enable ground nesting birds to settle in their breeding areas and raise their chicks.

Visitors to the reserve are asked to stay on the main paths and move away if birds show signs of agitation or distress.

Contact for further information: Ecosystem Policy Team ecopolicy@gov.im or Biodiversity Warden 07624 365131



Photo skylark nest with chicks taken by Louise Samson (under licence). Skylark are red listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man (BOCCIOM) 2021¹ due to a loss of nesting habitat.

¹ Morris N.G. & Sharpe C.M. (2021) Birds of Conservation Concern Isle of Man 2021. British Birds vol. 114, issue 9, pp 526–540