

Big Issue: Tourism

The wide open spaces of north-east England and south-east Scotland have created a local tourist industry worth several hundred million pounds, which employs thousands of people. Advertisements for the area show images of deserted beaches, solitary kite-surfers, gatherings of rare birds and seals swimming in clear blue water. But could visiting tourists damage the very places they are so keen to see?

Assess tourism's environmental impact

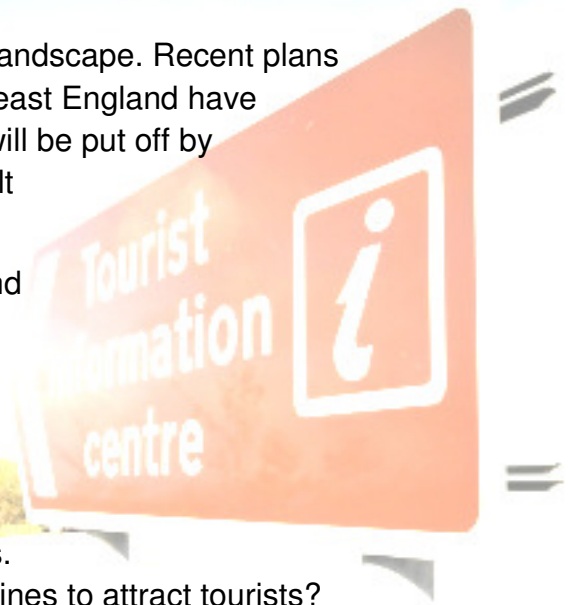
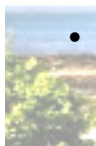
Choose a coastal location and make your own assessment of the impact of tourism.

- Visit the local Tourist Information Centre and find out about all the different tourist activities in the area.
- For each activity, think about the number of visitors, where they stay, how they get there, what they do, where they eat and what they do with their rubbish.
- Explore the area, looking for any visible signs of environmental concern (for example, litter or pollution, traffic congestion, damage to buildings, paths or plant life, or distressed animals or birds).
- Are there any places or activities where you think tourists could be harming the environment?
- If you were managing the area, would you change anything?

Tourism or green energy?

It's not just tourists who can affect the local landscape. Recent plans to build energy-efficient wind farms in north-east England have been opposed by people who think visitors will be put off by huge wind turbines towering over the unspoilt countryside and coast.

- Think of two reasons why building wind turbines in this area could be a good thing, and two reasons why it could be bad. Which is more important: Tourism or green energy?
- Some people think wind farms could become tourist attractions themselves. Can you think of any ways to use turbines to attract tourists?



Make your own tourism advertisement

- Choose somewhere you have visited on the coast that you think could be an attractive tourist destination.
- Write a list of the area's selling points and consider who they will be most appealing to (for example, families, nature lovers, extreme sports enthusiasts or older people).
- Take a picture that demonstrates one or more of the selling points, write a slogan that will appeal to your target audience and make a poster that could help attract visitors to the site.

Be a responsible visitor

If you are visiting a national park, AONB or protected area, check to see if they have a code of conduct. You can read the St Abbs & Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve Code of Conduct here: <http://www.marine-reserve.co.uk/volunteers-conservation/about/coc.php>. Even if there are no recommended rules, you should always:

- Leave animals and plants where you find them.
- Take your litter home with you.
- Stick to marked paths and close gates behind you.

Find out more about sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism aims to generate income and employment while conserving local culture and ecosystems. You can read about the Government's strategies for making tourism sustainable here:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/tourism/4247.aspx

