

Be a responsible snorkeller

Before you go

Check the conditions: be aware of tides, water temperatures, currents and weather forecasts before you leave.

Take a friend: never snorkel alone and always tell people where you are going.

Know who to contact: find out where the nearest medical and/or coastguard facility is and note down who to contact in an emergency.

At the beach

Know your surroundings: check what the weather and tides are doing, and identify a landmark for reference.

Use the right equipment: only use good quality and well-fitting equipment – mask, snorkel and fins.

Wear the right protection: a wetsuit will keep you warm and protect you against jellyfish stings. If it's sunny, remember to cream up!

In the water

Follow the Snorkeller's Code:

Do not remove seaweed or animals from the rock or from their homes.

Take care not to kick sealife with fins or stand on delicate animals.

Observe animals where they live and don't take anything away with you.

WARNING:

Do not snorkel in rough weather

Do not enter the water during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall, as water pollution may occur

Do not touch jellyfish and other wildlife
Never snorkel alone

Emergency services and coastguard: 999

NHS 24: 111

Balfour Hospital: 01856 888000

For further information, visit:
scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkeltrail

Orkney Snorkel Trail

E livingseas@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

W scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkel-trails

f [scottishwildlifetrust](https://www.facebook.com/scottishwildlifetrust)

@ScotWildlife

@scottishwildlifetrust



- 1 Stronsay, Ayre of Myres
- 2 Shapinsay, Elwick Bay
- 3 Finstown
- 4 Inganess Bay
- 5 Churchill Barriers
- 6 Hoy, The Ayre

Kraken Diving
Guided snorkelling and diving
krakendiving.co.uk
07933 492349

Scapa Scuba, Stromness
Snorkel equipment sales
scapascuba.co.uk
01856 851218

Leviathan International,
92 Victoria St, Stromness
Snorkel equipment sales
leviathaninternational.com
01856 850441

Pomona Prefect, Stronsay
Snorkel boat charter
07707 306787

Thank you to our funders:

Cath Downie, Pete Raines and their wedding guests for their generous donation



scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Harbourside House 110 Commercial Street Edinburgh EH6 6NF
T 0131 312 7765 E enquiries@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (no. SC040247). It is also a Scottish registered charity (no SC005792). Cover Image © Anne Bignall. Some of the images courtesy of NatureScot and Marine Scotland. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA FSA, USGS, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community.

Dive in to Scotland's Living Seas!



Snorkel Trail
Orkney

In association with



STROMNESS MUSEUM

Life under the waves

Orkney is home to a thriving marine environment. There are no guarantees as to what you might see whilst snorkelling (that's part of the fun!), but here are some common species to keep an eye out for:

Fish	 TWO SPOT GOBY	 SCORPION FISH	 SEA STICKLEBACK	 FLATFISH	Jellyfish	 LION'S MANE	 MOON	 BLUE	 SEA GOOSEBERRY						
	Crustaceans	 SHORE CRAB	 VELVET SWIMMING CRAB	 SPIDER CRAB		 HERMIT CRAB	Starfish and Urchins	 COMMON STARFISH	 COMMON URCHIN	 BLOODY HENRY	 BRITTLESTAR				
		Molluscs	 SOLAR POWERED SEA SLUG	 SEA HARE		 LITTLE CUTTLEFISH		 PAINTED TOPSHELL	Plants and Algae	 CODIUM	 KELP	 EGG WRACK	 SEAGRASS		
			Other Invertebrates	 DEAD MAN'S FINGERS		 SEA MAT		 DAHLIA ANEMONE		 COLONIAL SEASQUIRT	Share what you see...				
															

1



Stronsay, Ayre of Myres

MAP: HY654280

NEAREST VILLAGE: Whitehall

A serene sandy cove just a 10-minute walk from the ferry pier. Discover dense mosaics of stunning seaweeds, home to many species including colourful anemones. Advanced snorkellers can explore deeper, rocky habitats. The north side of the bay is prone to stronger winds and waves. Seals also haul out and swim here so please keep your distance to avoid disturbance. The Fishmart cafe/hostel has toilets and showers and the Stronsay Development Trust may offer wetsuit hire.

3



Finstown Bay of Firth

MAP: HY363137

NEAREST VILLAGE: Finstown

Enter the water at the recreational slip, taking care of slippery algae at the far end of it. In summer this area is a seagrass meadow – swim towards the end of the stone pier to the east. The seagrass bed is home to snakelocks anemones, sponges, sea squirts and starfish. Look out for variegated scallops attached to the rocks on the seabed. Be aware of other water users and make yourself visible (e.g. with tow-float/bright cap). Take care not to stand on the seagrass.

5



Churchill Barriers Number 2 and 3

MAP: ND478994 and ND473987

NEAREST TOWN: St Mary's and Burray

The barriers and wrecks are incredible artificial reefs for marine life. Discover deadman's fingers, sticklebacks, scorpionfish and colourful nudibranchs. The barriers provide shelter from wind and swell, meaning great options for most weather conditions. At the north end of Barrier 3, east side, there is a steep drop at the carpark and the seabed drops off suddenly shortly after entry. Weever fish, seen occasionally here, can sting if stood on without boots/fins.

2



Shapinsay, Elwick Bay

MAP: HY484168

NEAREST VILLAGE: Balfour Village

Elwick Bay was used as an anchorage by King Haakon IV of Norway before the Battle of Largs in 1263. This sheltered bay, just a 10-minute walk from the ferry pier, provides a seaweed garden of kelps and codium for snorkellers to enjoy. Take care walking down to the shore from the lay-by as the ground is uneven. For local services such as e-bike hire contact Shapinsay Development Trust.

4



Inganess Bay

MAP: HY475087

NEAREST VILLAGE: Kirkwall (2 miles)

The sandy seabed is home to flatfish, hermit and shore crabs and the occasional pipefish. Explore the seaweed at the bay's fringes too. A swim around the wreck of the Juanita is a must for advanced snorkellers, confident in deeper water. She is covered in encrusting animals and was originally sunk as a blockship at Churchill Barrier 4. Best accessed at low tide. Swim closer to shore if Arctic terns show signs of agitation at your presence and be aware of other water users such as jet skis.

6



Hoy, The Ayre Hoy and South Walls Causeway

MAP: ND291893

NEAREST TOWN: Longhope

Hoy and Walls Community bus runs a hail and ride service between Lyness and Longhope. Enter the water on the north side of the causeway in North Bay. Explore the seagrass area, looking out for brittlestars, nudibranchs and spider crabs. It is well worth spending time observing the rocks and boulders, to see lots of invertebrates like colourful worms.

Orkney

"The marine environment is integral to Orkney's community identity, people take quite a lot of pride in being able to say we have a really thriving ecosystem."

- Anonymous Orcadian, *Oceans of Value*

From sunken shipwrecks to shimmering seagrass, immerse yourself in Orkney's pristine coastal waters.



Positioned at the meeting point of the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, the Orkney archipelago benefits from strong tidal currents that deliver essential nutrients, supporting diverse marine ecosystems. War-time shipwrecks are a major draw for Orkney snorkellers, as are the Churchill Barriers which were built in WWII to prevent access to Scapa Flow by enemy submarines. While Orkney is renowned for its seabirds and marine mammals above water, there is an equally impressive array of life beneath the waves.

Stromness Museum, established by the Orkney Natural History Society in 1837, is one of Scotland's oldest independent museums. Located right on the shore, the museum's collections are intimately tied to Orkney's maritime heritage. Explore over 90 species of marine molluscs, a variety of echinoderms (including starfish and urchins), and a selection of crustaceans. Examining these specimens up close will aid in identifying species during your snorkelling adventures.

Wildlife Warning

Orkney has many breeding seal and nesting bird colonies. Please be sensitive by not snorkelling in these areas in pupping/nesting season. 📧 For grey seals this is October-November and for common seals June-July. 📧 Arctic terns breed from April-August.

For more information see sealalliance.org and nature.scot.

Wrecks

Wrecks can pose various risks to snorkellers. Don't attempt to enter or climb on the wrecks, or the Churchill Barriers.

Get in touch with Stromness Museum

stromnessmuseum.org.uk

T 01856 850 025

E custodian@stromnessmuseum.co.uk

📘 [stromnessmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/stromnessmuseum)

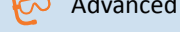
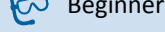
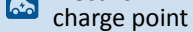
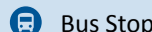
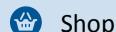
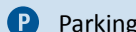
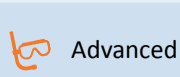
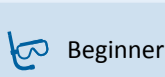
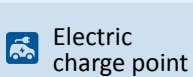
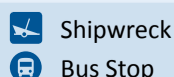
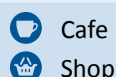
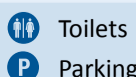
📷 [@stromnessmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/stromnessmuseum)

✉️ [@StromnessMuseum](https://twitter.com/StromnessMuseum)

📺 [@stromnessmuseum615](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC615...)

Snorkelling can be dangerous and these self-guided trails are used entirely at your own risk. It is your responsibility to check the conditions present on the day and assess whether it is safe to snorkel.

Key



The information contained within this leaflet was correct at the time of publishing (August 2024). For further details, please visit scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkeltrail