



Discover the  
**Berwickshire  
MARINE  
RESERVE**

AND THE  
**Beautiful Berwickshire Coast**

# Berwickshire MARINE RESERVE

*Scotland's first voluntary marine reserve*



## Discover the Berwickshire Marine Reserve and the beautiful Berwickshire Coast

This booklet aims to provide visitors with an introduction to this coastal area, the things which make it so special and to the huge range of activities available. Links to further information and websites can be found at the end of the booklet.

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## The Berwickshire Marine Reserve

Berwickshire Marine Reserve stretches from the historic fishing town of Eyemouth and encompasses the coastal village of St Abbs. The scenery here is stunning, with dramatic cliffs and rock formations as well as beautiful beaches and secluded bays. The combination of spectacular land formations, crystal-clear waters and abundant wildlife make it a paradise for visitors of all kinds.



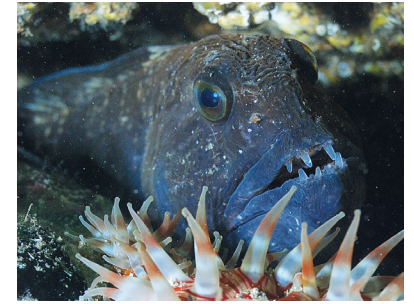
The waters here are world renowned for their rich biodiversity and are home to a remarkable range of marine life not found elsewhere in the UK. Warm water currents entering the North Sea over the northern tip of Scotland and cold water currents entering from the Arctic create a unique environment, allowing a host of magnificent plants and animals to thrive.

Grey Seals, Bottlenose Dolphins and Minke Whales can all be seen here, and below the waters there are magnificent kelp forests where vibrant and charismatic marine creatures such as the Wolffish can be seen.



However the area is also important for commercial fishing

especially for lobsters and crabs. So in order to make sure that the local fishing industry can be sustained and to help manage and conserve the unique marine environment, in 1984 the St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve was set up by local stakeholders and relevant organisations.



It was one of the first voluntary marine reserves to be set up in the UK and remains the only voluntary marine reserve in Scotland. The Reserve encompasses 8km of the Berwickshire coastline, and extends out to the 50 metre depth contour – covering a marine area of 10.3km<sup>2</sup>.



In 2020 the VMR became the Berwickshire Marine Reserve, a registered Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SCIO) with charitable status, established with three aims in order to make sure the coastal waters are protected and remain so for years to come. They are to:

- **Conserve the biodiversity of the coastal water**
- **Raise awareness of the marine environment through education and research**
- **Promote responsible recreational use alongside a sustainable fishery to the mutual benefit of all**

We ask all visitors and users of the reserve to help our conservation work by following the BMR 'Codes of Conduct' which encourages users to think about their impact on the environment and to minimise wildlife disturbance.

## The Coastal Landscape

The Berwickshire Marine Reserve is renowned for its incredible scenery. All along the Berwickshire Coast the most amazing rock formations can be seen. South of Berwick is the stunning Cocklawburn beach where beds of Carboniferous limestone and sandstones have been exposed and where fascinating fossil remains can be found.



*View from above Callercove Point near Eyemouth, looking North-West towards the volcanic rocks of St Abbs in the far distance*



*Vertical rocks at Ross Point, Burnmouth*

Further North, around Burnmouth, you are able to see rocks which contain the fossils of the earliest four-legged vertebrates to live on land as well as evidence in the rocks of the shallow lakes and rivers of this time, when the climate in Scotland was tropical. These rocks on



*The folded beds of greywacke at Pettico Wick on St Abbs Head*



*Eyemouth Fort seen from the beach at Eyemouth*

Burnmouth shore are also Carboniferous in age (350 million years old) and have been uplifted, tilted and faulted, so that the beds here are near-vertical.

From Eyemouth Bay there is a clear view of The Fort, where purple volcanic rocks are overlain by red sandstones and huge blocks of rock several metres in length have been broken off by the action of the sea.



*St Abbs village stands on the rocks of an ancient volcano*

One of the most well known parts of this coast is St Abbs Head with the prominent lighthouse and cliffs teeming with birds. This headland is carved almost entirely out of lavas, which are flows of molten rock across the earth's surface. The village of St Abbs owes its origins to the rough and jagged volcanic rocks which formed a natural harbour on which the present day harbour walls have been built.

However this area has been just above or below sea-level for most of the last 300 million years and any rocks deposited on top have been eroded away. In the last two million years, the area has been regularly covered by ice sheets. Since the ice melted, weathering, rockfall and marine erosion have continued to shape the coastal landscape.

Further North are some even more exciting formations. For this part of the coast is where James Hutton observed the rock strata and came up with his ideas about how they were formed. Hutton had a very varied background and for part of his life he was a farmer in Berwickshire. In 1788 he took a memorable boat trip



out to Siccar Point and this led him to write a publication which laid the foundations for our present understanding of geology. In this he showed that the Earth is the product of natural forces. The processes which can be seen happening today, over long periods of time could produce the features that we see in the rocks.

At Siccar Point it can be seen that there are two different types of rock. Underneath are horizontal, layers of sandstones and mudstones formed by sedimentation in deep water about 435 million years ago. These are greywackes which were formed when dramatic, fast-moving torrents of sediment were swept from shallow seas down into the deep ocean.

These layers were then uplifted by the massive forces created as two continents collided. This resulted in the layers being tilted and folded leaving them nearly vertical.



*Hutton's Unconformity at Siccar Point*

After being uplifted they were then weathered and eroded leaving the jagged edges of the layers exposed. Around 370

million years ago more sediment was deposited on top, seen today as the layers overlying layers of red sandstone.

The two sets of rocks at Siccar Point are separated by an unconformity which is visible as a sharp junction with the dark grey steeply-tilted rocks underneath and the much younger, almost horizontal red rocks on top. Hutton inferred from this that an enormous interval of time had been required for the underlying strata to be folded and eroded before the overlying sandstones were deposited.

## Walk the Coastal Path!

An excellent way to explore the coast is to walk along the Berwickshire Coastal Path. This path stretches 48km from Berwick-upon-Tweed in the south to Cockburnspath in the north where it links to the Southern Upland Way and the John Muir Way. It takes you through some of the most dramatic coastal scenery in Britain.



The full route can be completed in three days but accommodation in places is difficult and transport is limited so it requires a bit of forward planning. Full details of the route and how to access it can be found on [Scottish Borders Council's website](#).



Highlights along the path include Siccar Point where the amazing rocks which form James Hutton's Unconformity are located. The walk along this section also passes by the old fishing harbour at Cove and the nature reserve at Pease Bay. This site of Special Scientific Interest is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and is home to a wonderful selection of woodland birds as well as roe deer and red squirrels. The coastal path then brings you up to Dowlaw, where the most adventurous can scramble down to see the precipitous site of Fast Castle. Here the remains of an ancient castle are perched on the top of a rocky outcrop high above the crashing waves below.

From Dowlaw the path leads you through a varied landscape of farmland and moorland towards Tun Law. At 500 feet (150m) Tun Law is the highest cliff on the Berwickshire Coast and is also the site of two iron age forts.

The ramparts and ditches of these forts are a great spot for a picnic and also a good spot to see moorland birds and hares.

Half way down its length the path passes through the St Abbs Head National Nature Reserve, a breathtaking coastal headland with dramatic cliffs, famed for its seabird colonies and its Grey Seals. Once past the idyllic harbour village of St Abbs the path takes you along a string of beautiful beaches including the surfers' paradise of Coldingham Bay.

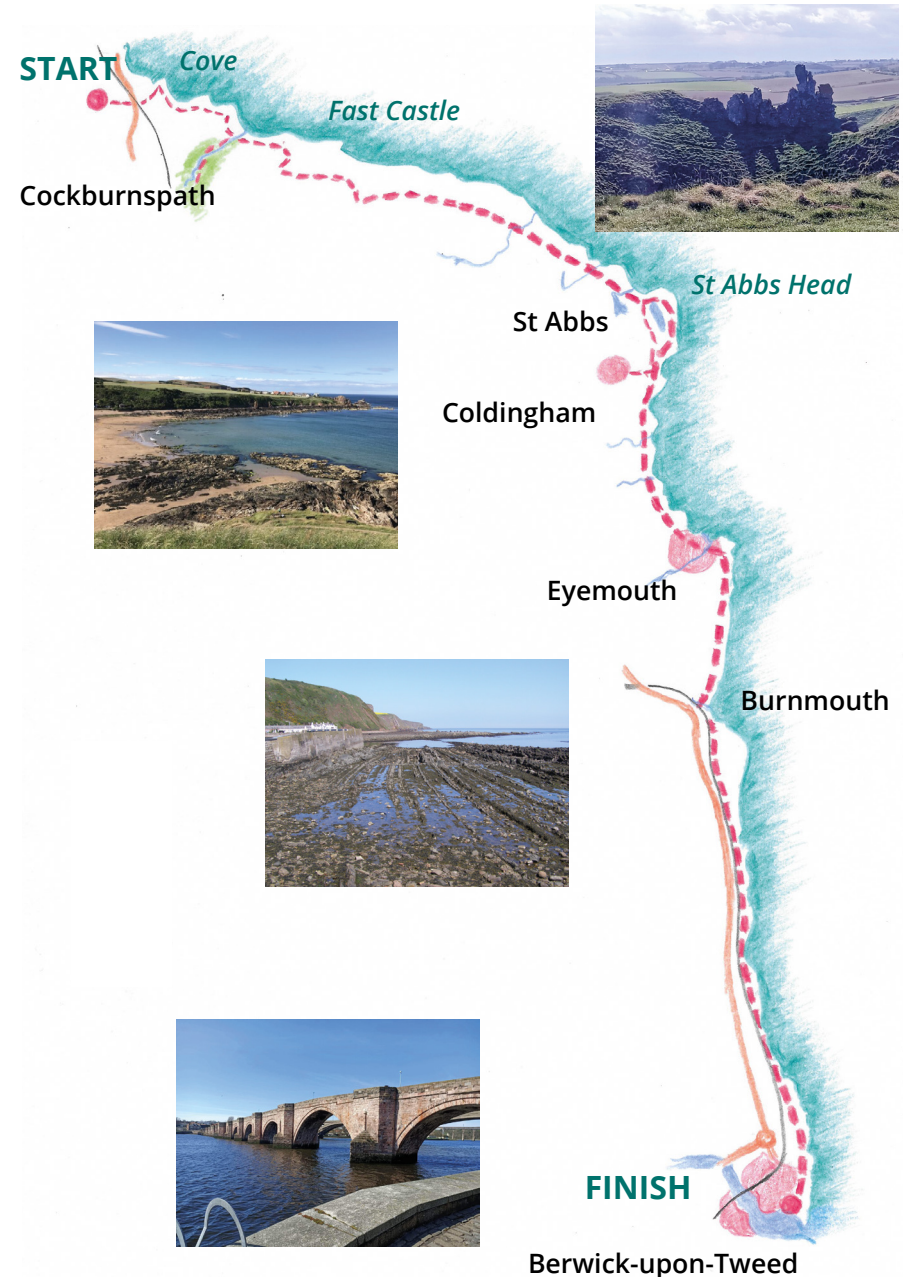


Eyemouth is a bustling fishing port with plenty to see and do. Visit the Eyemouth Museum and find out more about the 1881 Fishing Disaster which is remembered in the poignant sculptures placed in the 4 fishing ports along this route. Eyemouth has been Scotland's largest south-eastern port since 1482 and the 16th Century fort bears witness to its turbulent past. Gunsgreen House tells of a different piece of history, of smuggling and illegal imports.

The coastal path climbs up along the golf course and then drops suddenly down into the harbour at Burnmouth. This picturesque port served the cluster of villages that snuggle against the cliffs here. After this it winds its way along cliffs which, although not so high, have plenty of interest including an old fishery, a fascinating nature reserve and the ramparts of Berwick upon Tweed.

These ramparts provide a pleasant scenic walk around the town and were built in the 16th century in response to the building of the French fort at Eyemouth. Berwick sits on the river Tweed and the boundary between Scotland and England. It has changed hands 14 times! Here the river is spanned by three impressive bridges.

## The Berwickshire Coastal Path





## Bird life along the coast

The stunning coast of Berwickshire, surrounded by food-rich seas provides an essential feeding station for migrating birds as well as being a safe winter haven for ducks, geese and shorebirds, and is the ideal summer home for nesting seabirds.



*Swans on Mire Loch*

In spring the cliffs along this coast are teeming with nesting birds. Although they look a very unlikely place to lay an egg, these sheer cliffs provide the perfect habitat where the young can be reared out of reach of predators. St Abbs Head, in particular, is one of Britain's most accessible seabird colonies. In late spring and early summer, the rugged headland is home to thousands of guillemots, razorbills and kittiwakes.

These breathtaking cliffs are excellent places from which to view the birds. The noise of the birds calling to each other can be deafening as they circle their nests, bringing food for the young and protecting them from becoming food for other birds. They are skilful aviators, using the rising currents of air to lift them and soaring away out to sea again to search for food.



*Nesting seabirds at St Abbs.*  
*Photo courtesy Jack Laws*

Fulmars nest high up on grassy ledges, and ward off intruders by spitting foul-smelling fish oil at them. Kittiwakes also prefer these

sheer cliff faces, building their nests out of grass and mud. Their piercing cry of "kitty-wake" adds to the clamour.

Lower down the cliffs, where the ledges are wider, groups of black and white guillemots and razorbills are crowded together. Down on the flatter rocks nearer the sea, shags and herring gulls can be seen on their nests.



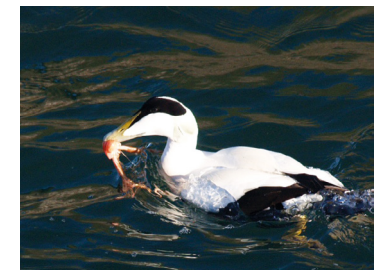
*Gannets landing on their nest sites at ST Abbs Head.*  
*Photo courtesy Jack Laws.*



*Kestrel and chicks on the cliffs at St Abbs Head.*  
*Photo courtesy Jack Laws.*

But the cliffs are not the only place to see some wonderful birds and throughout the whole year all kinds of different types of bird can be seen. Wildfowl, for example, are often found on estuaries or coastal marshland, and ravens, doves and kestrels regularly make use of sea cliffs. Gannets can be seen flying in skeins along the surface of the sea or diving from a great height like torpedoes dropping from the sky.

Eider ducks are resident here all year. They are true sea ducks, living on the coast and relying on coastal molluscs as their main source of food. In the breeding season they are quite vocal, with males frequently giving pleasant cooing calls that can be heard far across the water on still days. Eiders are highly gregarious and usually stay close inshore, riding the swell in a sandy bay or strung in long lines out beyond the breaking waves.



*Eider Duck with Shrimp on Mire Loch.*  
*Photo courtesy Jack Laws.*

Along the shore-line waders can be seen picking insects out of the seaweed or trotting in and out of the surf to catch their prey. Our most common shorebird, the dunlin, can often be seen in large flocks prodding the sand with its slightly down-curved beak.

Another common wader is the oyster catcher. A stocky, unmistakable black-and-white shorebird with a huge, bright orange bill that it uses for breaking and entering mussels and cockles. Sometimes seen in flocks inland, feeding on fields, its urgent piping call can be heard echoing across the rocky shores.

The Nature Reserve at St Abbs Head contains a wide range of habitats and supports a very diverse variety of wildlife. Mire Loch is a refuge for many wildfowl and all year round the reeds and the woods surrounding the loch are full of bird song.

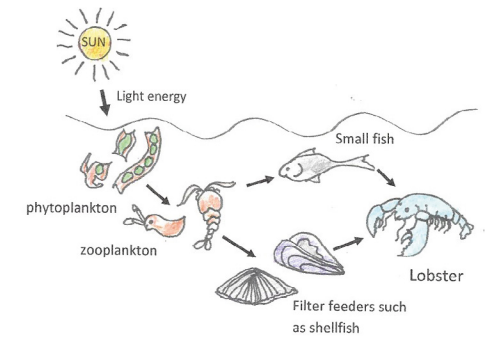
## Life in the Sea

The rich sea currents found off the Berwickshire Coast provide the perfect environment for the growth of millions of tiny plants and animals known as plankton. Phytoplankton form the foundation of the marine food web since they are able to carry out the process known as photosynthesis. Derived from the Greek words phyto (plant) and plankton (made to wander or drift), phytoplankton are microscopic organisms that live in watery environments, both salty and fresh. They use the sun's energy to build glucose and starch from carbon dioxide and water.

Phytoplankton are known as the primary producers, feeding everything from microscopic, animal-like zooplankton to enormous whales. Small fish and invertebrates also graze on the plant-like organisms, and then those smaller animals are eaten by bigger ones. A fin whale feeds on small fish, such as herring. The herring

feed on smaller fish and the smaller fish feed on even smaller organisms such as the phytoplankton which get their energy directly from sunshine.

Phytoplankton are also responsible for absorbing most of the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in the ocean. Carbon dioxide is taken up during photosynthesis, and the carbon is incorporated into the phytoplankton, just as carbon is stored in the leaves and wood of trees.



*These larger fish and crustaceans feed the larger animals such as seals and large birds.*

## Lobsters

Fishing has been a vital part in the local economy for hundreds of years. The shoals of herring used to travel south following the coast and the fishing boats would harvest these fish in their thousands. A decline in the fish stocks also led to a decline in the fishing industry in the area.

Following a major upgrade to the harbour in 1965 Eyemouth has continued to be a busy, viable fishing port. Today however, lobsters and crabs are the major catch.

The Common Lobster is a species of clawed lobster





which is found all around the British Isles. They generally hide away in cracks and crevices in rocks during the day, as smaller lobsters are themselves prey for large fish. They emerge to feed at night when they scour the seabed and will eat pretty much anything they can find such as marine worms, starfish, other crustaceans and dead fish.

There are a number of measures put in place by many fisheries in an attempt to maintain lobster numbers. These include minimum size limits and a system where notches are cut into the tail of female lobsters at peak breeding age, these lobsters cannot be caught until the notches have grown out.

## Seals

The Berwickshire Marine Reserve is home to many different types of animals and seals are one of the most enchanting species found here.

Seals belong to a group of mammals called pinnipeds, which means flap-footed, and refers to their webbed feet. There are two types of seal found along the Berwickshire Coast; the Common or Harbour seal, *Phoca vitulina*, and the Grey seal, *Halichoerus grypus*. Both common and grey seals can be seen resting on rocky islets offshore or swimming close in, their heads protruding inquisitively from the water.



*Young Grey Seal.*  
*Photo courtesy Vivienne Mackett.*

More Grey seals breed in Scotland than anywhere else in the world and the rocky beaches around St Abbs Head are an important



*Photo courtesy Ciaran Hatsell NTS*

breeding ground. Pups are born on the beach in the autumn and spend three weeks being fed by their mothers before setting off out into the sea themselves. The pups are white and fluffy at first but before they are fully weaned they will become darker.

Seals regularly 'haul out' to digest their food or rest, so if you meet one on a beach, give it plenty of space and keep dogs away. This is especially true for mothers and pups.

Seals are also easily spooked from their rocky resting spots, so if in a boat or kayak, maintain a distance of at least 100m where possible.

If you suspect a pup has been abandoned or a seal is injured and in need of attention, keep your distance and call for help. The BDMLR hotline number is **01825 765546**.



*Grey seal and pup at St Abbs Head.*  
*Photo courtesy Ciaran Hatsell NTS*

Entanglement in marine litter and ghost fishing gear is a big threat to seals. Why not participate in a beach clean or simply pick up and safely dispose of any rope, strapping or net next time you're at the beach.



*Photo courtesy Ciaran Hatsell NTS*

Seals are mammals and feed their young on milk. This photo shows a grey seal suckling her calf.



## Berwickshire Marine Reserve (BMR)

The Berwickshire Marine Reserve has been working to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and sustainability of these unique coastal waters since 1984.

TODAY it is still the only Voluntary Marine Reserve in Scotland and is the second oldest marine reserve in the UK.

### We aim to:

- Conserve the biodiversity of the coastal waters
- Raise awareness of the marine environment through education and research
- Promote responsible recreational use alongside a sustainable fishery to the mutual benefit of all

## Working Together to Conserve our Reserve

A hotspot for recreational users, the BMR treads a balancing act between supporting local businesses and tourism and sitting within the statutory network of 355 Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) and the statutory designations of a coastal SSSI, a European Marine Site and a Scottish Government managed Static Gear Reserve.

Our voluntary Codes of Conduct were established to protect the things that make the BMR such a special place - an internationally important marine reserve.

Please adhere to these agreed codes, appropriate for each of your activities. Further advice is available from [www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk](http://www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk)

Contact Us: Tel: 01890 752509 Email: [info@berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk](mailto:info@berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk)  
[www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk](http://www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk)

@berwickshiremarinereserve



Scottish Borders Local Action Group is part financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community LEADER 2014-2020 Programme



## Code of Conduct - General Code

The General Codes of Conduct apply to all recreational activities in the marine reserve. For more detailed information on recreational use, please see our 'recreational user guide' available at [www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk](http://www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk)

- Stay safe: always check the tide and weather conditions, and inform someone of your location.
- Be aware of other users of the marine reserve.
- Respect wildlife: Leave wildlife where you find it, taking care not to damage fauna and flora.
- Be aware of the local protected area designations
- Minimise Disturbance (seabirds): seabirds are most sensitive to disturbance while nesting (March - October). Keep a distance of 100m, reduce your noise and recognise the signs of disturbance.
- Minimise Disturbance (seals): seals 'haul out' to pup (October - January). Keep a distance of 100m, reduce your noise and recognise the signs of disturbance. Remember that marine mammals and many birds are protected by law from reckless disturbance or harassment.
- Be aware of local fishing activity and don't interfere with buoys, pots, and pot markers. It is illegal and dangerous.
- Take all rubbish away with you, and use marine friendly equipment and products to avoid pollution.

[www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk](http://www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk)



## Cetaceans

The coastal waters of Berwickshire are home to a remarkable and truly unique mix of marine life not found elsewhere in the UK. Not only do hundreds of Grey Seals come here to breed but Bottlenose Dolphins, Minke Whales and Harbour Porpoise can all be seen here.



*Bottlenose Dolphins at play.  
Photo courtesy WDC.*



*This photo shows the single blow hole  
of a White beaked dolphin.  
Photo courtesy WDC.*

Dolphins, Minke Whales and Porpoises are classified as cetaceans which means they are fully aquatic, have a streamlined body shape and an exclusively carnivorous diet. They all breathe air through a blow hole situated at the back of their heads and propel themselves through the water with the powerful up-and-down movement of their tail.

Dolphins and Porpoises are known as **Odontocetes**, meaning they have teeth and a single blow hole.

Minke Whales, along with Blue Whales and Humpback Whales are **Mysticetes**, have two blow holes and catch their prey using hairy baleen plates hanging down from their upper jaw.



*This photo shows the baleen plates on a Fin  
whale which washed up on a beach on Coll.  
Photo courtesy Caroline Lathe.*



Dolphins are easily spotted since they usually travel in groups (pods) and enjoy leaping out of the water. Minke Whales in contrast are often difficult to see, appearing like a log, floating on the surface.

The Harbour porpoise is the smallest cetacean found in Scottish waters and tend to be seen alone or in small groups. They can be quite difficult to spot but sometimes you may hear them making a loud puffing sound when they come to the surface and “blow”. Watching cetaceans in the wild is a privileged experience and everyone has their own unique encounters with these amazing creatures. WDC collates sightings from all around the UK.

Go to **Shorewatch (whales.org)** to record your sightings.



**Or join the BMR volunteers!**

## Rockpooling

One of the best ways to explore the life in the oceans is to begin on the beach. Even a sandy beach has plenty to offer. Look out for shells and worm casts, birds and their tracks in the sand, seaweed and drift wood.

If your beach has some rocks then there is a wealth of treasures to explore. Rockpooling can be enjoyed by all ages and is easy to carry out. The majority of the beaches within the BMR are great



rockpooling spots with easy access. Rockpooling is all about having fun and getting to see the variety of sea life living on our shores. The beach at Eyemouth has some wonderful rockpools and the beaches at Coldingham and Killiedraughts are well worth exploring.

## Planning your adventure...

**Check the tide times.** Try to arrive as the tide is going out since the Rockpools exposed at low tides have a wider variety of organisms living in them. But watch out for when the tide turns. (The BBC has tide tables for the UK)

**Make sure you wear sensible clothing** for the weather - and don't forget the sunscreen.

**Rocks can be slippery and sharp** so wear shoes or boots.

**Take along some equipment to help.** Firstly take something to put your finds in. A bucket or plastic box is useful and a glass jar to get a better look at your specimens.

A net of some sort. Rather than buying more plastic, make your own and recycle! Use a clothes hanger and some old net curtains.

**The BMR has complete kits of rockpooling equipment to hire so call in at the Hippodrome beforehand to collect yours.**

If you're really keen, find an ID guide or use your phone. A hand held magnifying glass is useful.



## What to do...

Find an interesting looking pool and approach it quietly. Try not to cast a shadow over it because the animals in it might think you are a predator and will hide.

Take time to look carefully all around the pool and under the seaweeds. Slowly reach in and move the fronds aside and turn over stones.

Use a tub or a net to scoop up any interesting objects. Be really careful not to damage anything whilst you are doing this.

If you want to have a closer look you can place your finds in a tray or in a jar. Keep them covered with water and use a magnifying glass to see them more clearly. Don't keep them in the container for too long since this might harm them.

Can you identify what it is you have found? Use the ID guide and record your results. Take photos (and make sure you enter them into the BMR Splash In photography competition!)

When you have finished studying your specimens, return them carefully to the pool by re-submerging the container.

## Life on the edge

Rockpools may look serene to human observers, but they can be tough environments for plants and animals to live in. Twice a day the sea washes over them and then retreats,



*Limpets on the rocks*



resulting in fierce competition for resources in cramped living conditions. Inhabitants have to cope with changes in temperature, oxygen levels, moisture and salinity.

## Rockpool organisms

Here are a few common organisms that you might find whilst exploring:



*Hermit Crab*



*Barnacles*



*Shrimp*

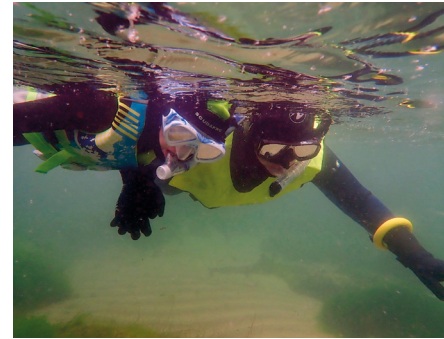
## Discovering Life under the Sea

The waters of the Berwickshire Marine Reserve are celebrated for being full of all sorts of amazing things: Forests of kelp, shoals of sparkling fish, ancient wrecks and dark, mysterious caves. There is plenty to be seen from the shore but there is so much more down below the waves...



And getting to see what is under the water is easier than you think.

## Snorkelling



Snorkelling is a fun and easy way to explore the underwater world and all you need is a mask, a snorkel, and fins.

Snorkelling can be done in any clear and calm water, from tropical reefs to lakes and rivers, and even in pools and aquariums. It is an easy and fun activity which requires minimal equipment and training, but it is definitely best to learn some basic skills and safety tips to enhance the experience and prevent accidents.

Technically, snorkelling is just like floating horizontally on the surface of the water and requires little actual swimming, so even non-swimmers can do it. However, this activity is done in open water and therefore has potential hazards even for those who are good swimmers.



Using snorkelling equipment allows you to swim while breathing with your face and body submerged underwater. Unlike scuba diving though, you are confined to staying on the surface as you don't want your snorkel (breathing tube) to fill up with water. Due

to the passive, slow nature of snorkelling though, keeping warm is paramount. So wearing the right wetsuit is really important.

The best way to snorkel is in a group. Sign up for a tour led by a local guide or find fellow snorkelers you can join; this will give you increased safety, and you will make new friendships too!

Snorkelling in the open ocean can expose you to many surprises like an unexpected injury, drifting too far from the shore, developing cramps or just simply getting tired. Such situations are usually not life-threatening but a lot easier to solve if you have someone with you who is more experienced.

Don't forget an underwater camera so that you can capture your unique experience and all the marine life around you! (And don't forget to enter the BMR Splash In photo competition!)

## Berwickshire Snorkel Trails

There are five snorkel trails within the Berwickshire Marine Reserve which were developed in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust as part of their Living Seas programme.

To find out more and to download copies of the maps visit:



- 1 Starney Bay
- 2 Coldingham Bay
- 3 Milldown Bay
- 4 Weasel Loch
- 5 Eyemouth Beach

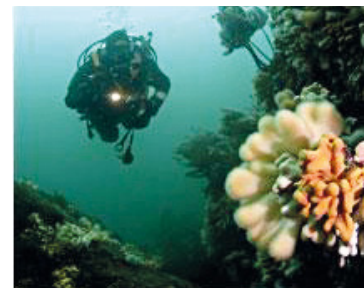
## Diving

Below the waves lie spectacular kelp forests, home to a vast array of sea creatures, including sea urchins, starfish, sea slugs and a host of different fish species.



As you descend deeper, colourful soft corals swathe reefs and Wolf fish lurk in cracks and crevices.

Scuba diving is an adventure sport that lets you explore deeper into the underwater world. However you need special equipment, training and certification in order to scuba dive safely. Once you have completed the training then there are plenty of dive specialists in the area who would love to help you explore.



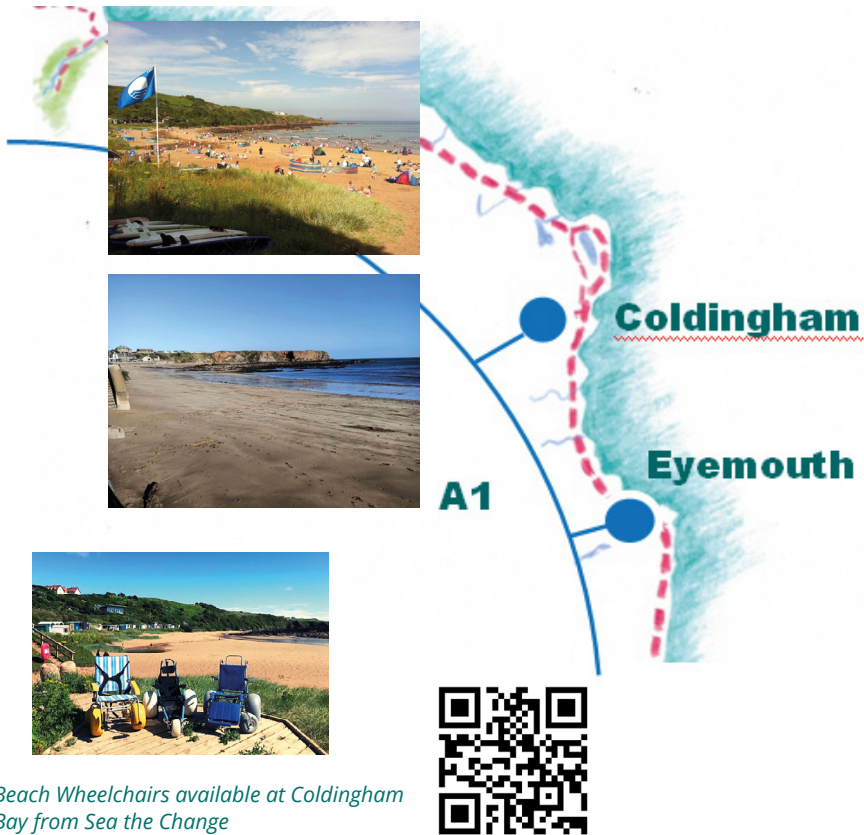
Berwickshire's coastal waters are a diver's paradise and there are a number of dive sites that demonstrate the wealth and diversity of marine life and the habitats to be found within the Reserve.

**The BMR has produced a guide to diving in the reserve which is highly recommended.**

We ask that divers comply with our code of conduct which should be observed whether diving within or outside of the Marine Reserve, to help us look after our wildlife and habitats.



## A couple of the Best Beaches!



*Beach Wheelchairs available at Coldingham Bay from Sea the Change*

Swimming is one of the most exhilarating ways to enjoy the sea and the beaches along the Berwickshire coast are the perfect places to swim. There are long, clear stretches of sand such as the Eyemouth beach, pebbly beaches and beaches with plenty of surf. There are a few hidden gems which you need to scramble down to, but whichever beach you choose make sure you always take a few sensible precautions: never swim alone, carry a means of calling for help and always be aware of the tides and weather forecasts.

In 2022 **Coldingham Beach** won the Best Beach Award and with due reason. A broad track leads down from the car parking area and allows access for disabled visitors. Once at the beach there are beach wheelchairs available and easy access ramps. There are toilets, a seasonal cafe, a surf shop and most importantly, this beach is patrolled throughout the summer by RNLI lifeguards.



*Blue flag beach award*



*New Years Day on Coldingham Sands*

RNLI lifeguards have been patrolling beaches since 2001. They share safety advice, provide first aid to those who need it, and rescue those who get in trouble in the water.

**Look out for the RED & YELLOW flags.** These show the supervised area of the beach

and that a lifesaving service is operating. A plain red flag indicates that the water is dangerous, do not enter the water under any circumstances .

**Eyemouth Beach** is right in the middle of the town with access to toilets, shops, restaurants and world famous ice creams! There is a long sweep of gently sloping sand leading to a fantastic area of rocks where all the family can enjoy exploring the myriad Rockpools.

If it's a bit too cold you can always visit the Eyemouth Leisure Centre Pool - right next to the beach!

## More activities on the water!

This area of the coastline is full of so many different activities both on the land and on the water.

### Surfing

Coldingham Bay is a popular surfing destination. It is located on an idyllic, sandy, sheltered bay that is served by public toilets (disabled toilet available), a café open during peak season and the beach lifeguards during the summer months.



### Coastal Rowing

There are two rowing clubs in this area, St Abbs and Eyemouth.



The clubs are introducing their communities to social rowing, expeditions, and friendly racing in St Ayles skiffs and sometimes other designs of coastal rowing boats too. Thousands of people new to these activities are enjoying the teamwork

required to build and race these boats. As well as making new friends within their communities, participants meet and learn about the other communities who are participating, many of which share a common history through the sea.

## Boating

What better way to explore the coast than an exhilarating ride on a boat!

The waters around the UK are home to a fantastic variety of marine wildlife, whether visible from the shore or from a boat.



However, these wild animals are vulnerable to disturbance if not encountered in a manner that respects their wild nature. Please refer to the BMR Codes of Conduct for guidance.



If you don't have your own boat there are still plenty of opportunities for enjoying a boat trip around the coast. If you are taking part in organised boating activity, such as wildlife watching trips using one of the local operators then please check that they are accredited with the WiSe scheme.

The WiSe Scheme is about watching marine wildlife the wildlife-safe way.



## Safety on the Coast

Much of our Berwickshire coastline is made up of cliffs and rocks. Keep away from the edge, take care walking in slippery or dark conditions, keep any dogs on leads and let someone know where you are going.



If you get into difficulty, would you know what to do? We have a beautiful coastline but conditions change quickly and it can be easier to get into trouble than you think. For advice on staying safe and reducing risks [www.rnli.org/safety](http://www.rnli.org/safety)

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. In 2022 lifeguards saved 117 people and volunteer lifeboat crews saved 389 lives. Powered primarily by donations and thousands of volunteers, the search and rescue service has been saving lives for almost 200 years.

## The St Abbs Independent Lifeboat

There has been a lifeboat in St Abbs for over 100 years.

In 2015, the RNLI conducted a review of the East coast service and decided that the lifeboat at St Abbs was no longer needed and that the area could be covered by boats from Eyemouth and Dunbar. This was devastating news to those who lived and worked in the village and amongst those from across the UK who use the coastal waters. Despite an energetic campaign to save the lifeboat, on the 7th of



September 2015 the lifeboat was removed, and the lifeboat shed was left empty.

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Local campaigners turned their passion and belief into a campaign to raise £500,000 to set up as an independent lifeboat. Donations came flooding in, both large and small from businesses,



diving groups, canoe clubs, school children and individuals. The campaign was particularly helped by a large donation from a Scottish confectioner. By November 2015 enough funds had been raised to purchase a new purpose-built

boat. On the 17th of September 2016 the `Thomas Tunnock` a MST 900W inshore SAR was launched.

The Independent Lifeboat is now run by a group of around 50 volunteers. They continue to raise funds and aim to provide a first-class service in perpetuity along the coastline of St Abbs. The St Abbs Independent Lifeboat continues to be on service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## The Eyemouth Lifeboat

Eyemouth Lifeboat Station was established in 1876 and is located in Gunsreen Quay. It currently operates a Shannon class all-weather lifeboat and a D class inshore lifeboat.

For more information on [Eyemouth Lifeboat Station](#), its history and latest updates please see [here](#).



## Contacts

### Reporting Problems

Emergency service	Dial 999 for coastguard
Marine Mammal strandings	BDMLR - 01825 765546
Pollution spills	Coastguard or SEPA (0800 80 70 60)
Other	Berwickshire Marine Reserve - 01890 752509

### Local operators and supporters of BMR

Active 4 Seasons	<a href="http://www.active4seasons.co.uk">www.active4seasons.co.uk</a>
Aquamarine Charters <i>w</i>	<a href="http://www.aquamarine-charters.com">www.aquamarine-charters.com</a>
Dive St Abbs	<a href="http://www.divestabbs.com">www.divestabbs.com</a>
Divestay <i>w</i>	<a href="http://www.divestay.co.uk">www.divestay.co.uk</a>
Eyemouth Rib Trips <i>w</i>	<a href="http://www.eyemouthribtrips.co.uk">www.eyemouthribtrips.co.uk</a>
Marine Quest	<a href="http://www.marinequest.co.uk">www.marinequest.co.uk</a>
Riptide	<a href="http://www.ribridesstabbs.co.uk">www.ribridesstabbs.co.uk</a>
Snorkel Wild <i>w</i>	<a href="http://www.snorkelwild.com">www.snorkelwild.com</a>
St Abbs Charters <i>w</i>	<a href="http://www.stabbscharters.com">www.stabbscharters.com</a>
St Abbs Diving <i>w</i>	<a href="http://www.st.abbsdiving.com">www.st.abbsdiving.com</a>
St Abbs Lifeboat	<a href="http://www.stabbslifeboat.org.uk">www.stabbslifeboat.org.uk</a>
St Vedas Surf Shop	<a href="http://www.stvedas.co.uk">www.stvedas.co.uk</a>

### Visiting Yachts and Vessels

Eyemouth Harbour Trust	<a href="http://www.eyemouth-harbour.co.uk">www.eyemouth-harbour.co.uk</a>
St Abbs Harbour Trust	

### Visitor Services

Visit Berwickshire Coast	<a href="http://www.visitberwickshirecoast.co.uk">www.visitberwickshirecoast.co.uk</a>
St Abbs Visitor Centre	<a href="http://www.stabbsvisitorcentre.co.uk">www.stabbsvisitorcentre.co.uk</a>
Eyemouth Tourist Information Centre	<a href="http://www.eyemouthmuseum.co.uk">www.eyemouthmuseum.co.uk</a>
National Trust St Abbs Head	<a href="http://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/st-abbs-head">www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/st-abbs-head</a>

*\*w - local operators who are WiSe trained*

The Berwickshire Marine Reserve (BMR) is a registered charity and is Scotland's only voluntary marine reserve.

The charity has three main aims in order to make sure the coastal waters are protected and remain so for years to come:

- **Conserve the biodiversity of the coastal waters**
- **Raise awareness of the marine environment through education and research**
- **Promote responsible recreational use alongside a sustainable fishery to the mutual benefit of all**

### Email:

[info@berwickshiramarinereserve.org.uk](mailto:info@berwickshiramarinereserve.org.uk)

### Website:

[www.berwickshiramarinereserve.org.uk](http://www.berwickshiramarinereserve.org.uk)

### Phone:

01890 752509

### Address:

The Hippodrome, Harbour Road,  
Eyemouth TD14 5HT

### Socials:

@berwickshiramarinereserve

***Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the production of this guide.***



*Leave nothing behind but ripples on the water  
and footprints in the sand*



[www.berwickshiramarinereserve.org.uk](http://www.berwickshiramarinereserve.org.uk)



