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: **999** NHS 24: **111**

Coastguard stations in Ballantrae, Girvan and Ayr.

Lifeboat stations in Girvan and Troon.

For further information, visit:

scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkeltrail

South Ayrshire Snorkel Trail

E livingseas@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

W scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkel-trails

scottishwildlifetrust

@ScotWildlife

@scottishwildlifetrust

1. Big Isle
2. Horse Rock
3. Maidens West Pier Beach
4. Culzean Country Park
5. Dunure Castle
6. Ballast Bank

Adventure Carrick
Guided snorkel sessions and wetsuit hire
adventurecarrick.com

Ballast Bank Bathers
Local Facebook open water swimming group
groups/350870982878917

Troon Water Sports Hub
Cafe and wetsuit hire

Carrick Coastal Rowing, Maidens
Trial rows and join club rows
carrickcoastalrowing.com

Destination South Ayrshire

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Scottish Wildlife Trust

scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Harbourside House 110 Commercial Street Edinburgh EH6 6NF

T 0131 312 7765 E enquiries@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

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Dive in to Scotland's Living Seas!

Scottish Wildlife Trust

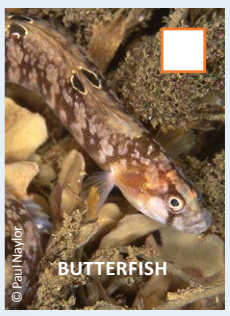
Snorkel Trail
South Ayrshire

In association with ADVENTURE CARRICK

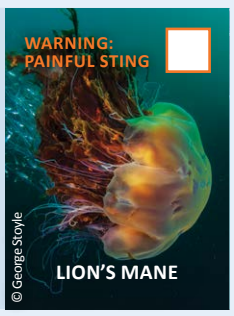
Life under the waves

South Ayrshire 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

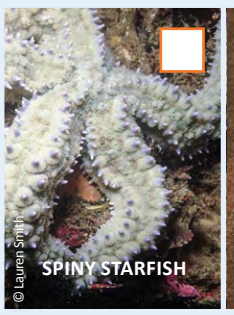


Jellyfish

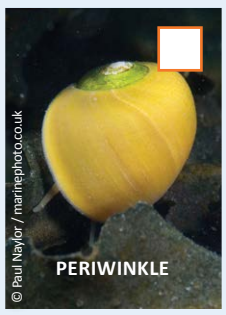


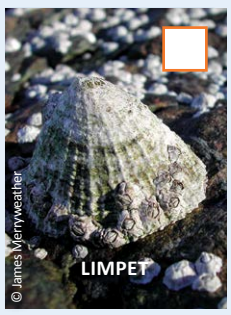
Crustaceans

Starfish and Urchins

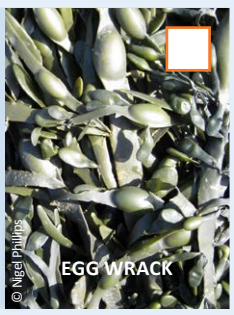


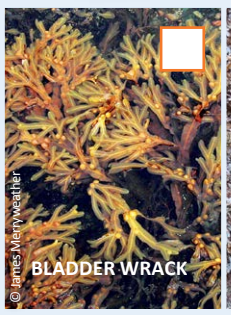
Molluscs

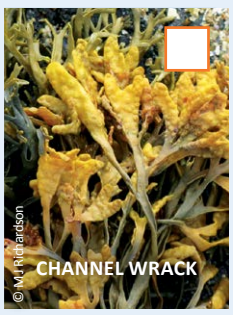




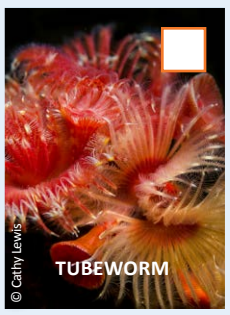
Plants and Algae







Other Invertebrates



Also look out for...

- BLACK GUILLEMOT
- GREAT NORTHERN DIVER
- SANDERLINGS
- PLOVERS
- GREY SEALS
- BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN

Remember the three Ts:
No touching, taking or teasing of marine animals, plants or shells.

Share your snorkel experiences here!

1

Big Isle

MAP: NX121894
NEAREST VILLAGE: Lendalfoot

Big Isle sits to the south of the picturesque village of Lendalfoot. A memorial to a historic wrecked Russian warship that lies here. Big Isle can be accessed by foot at low tide by a sandy causeway. At high tide, it makes for some easily accessible, sheltered, beginners snorkelling, in an area known as the inner sea. You might get the feeling you are being watched - there are plenty of seals to keep you company. Park in the Varyag monument car park.

2

Horse Rock

MAP: NX179961
NEAREST TOWN: Girvan

Horse Rock is an easily accessible beach for the perfect family day out. Toilets and a snack shack are situated in the carpark. At low tide there is a sandy causeway out to rocks, made of conglomerates resting on Ballantrae Ophiolite. The seaward side of the rock is deep and excellent for experienced snorkelers. At high tide, the sheltered sandy location is great for beginners. Look out for marine life latched to rocks, from diverse crab species to colourful anemones and starfish.

3

Maidens West Pier Beach

MAP: NS206079
NEAREST VILLAGE: Maidens

Maidens, a tourist-favoured village with multiple caravan parks, features a picturesque sandy bay leading to the Southern harbour. Snorkelling access is available through a narrow path in the harbour car park, leading to a secluded sandy cove behind the harbour wall. Ancient Devonian lavas have created an intertidal zone that supports diverse seaweeds and rockpool species.

4

Culzean Country Park

MAP: NS220096, NS235103
NEAREST TOWN: Maybole (5.5 miles)

The National Trust for Scotland's Culzean Country Park features two excellent snorkelling areas. Pass the Pagoda and down steps to reach Port Carrick, a popular sandy beach with rocky outcrops and sea cave. Watch out for seals, the skerries are a favourite spot of theirs. Gas House Bay, near the visitor centre (Home Farm), provides steps and an accessible route to the sandy shore below Culzean Castle. A jaw-dropping backdrop to enjoy. Please note paid entry to the Park is required.

5

Dunure Castle

MAP: NS252159
NEAREST VILLAGE: Dunure

Dunure is a lovely small coastal village that is dominated by the old ruined castle and harbour which sits on a rocky shoreline. There is easy access to the beach environment from the harbour or Kennedy Park where the public toilet is located. Its rocky headlands and skerries are great for snorkelling and give wonderful diversities of seaweed communities, teeming with life. There are also small patches of seagrass in the area. Note toilets are closed seasonally.

6

Ballast Bank

MAP: NS310309
NEAREST VILLAGE: Troon

Within Troon, with all the usual public amenities, Ballast Bank is accessed from the old slipway situated near the parking area at the north of the bank. The south westerly facing rocky shore line holds interest at both low and high water. Kelp beds, gullies and sandy patches all create a home for a variety of sea life. Follow the footpath and please do not walk along the sea wall; this has a steep drop to rocks below.

Key

Toilets · Parking · Shop · Café · Bus · Train · Play park

Beginner · Advanced

South Ayrshire

Snorkel below castles, around skerries and through ancient volcanic sea caves, all with the majestic Ailsa Craig rising from the Firth of Clyde.

From Ballantrae to Troon, experience the enchanting rugged beauty of the South Ayrshire coastline. Traverse rocky lava platforms, now full of rockpools, to reach beaches of golden sand. Snorkel within the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere, where a hidden world of marine treasures awaits. Coastal waters are teeming with marine life as well as in some places, semi-precious stones including jasper and amethyst.

Search below while you are surrounded above by geological formations of no less than 350 million years old. Share the company of the iconic Ailsa Craig which overlooks all snorkel sites. This extinct volcano is of historical importance and is home to the third largest seabird colony in Britain. These different geological formations create diverse habitats for an array of marine life, from large marine mammals such as seals, otters and porpoise to vibrant beds of yellow periwinkles.

Based in Girvan, the Adventure Centre for Education (ACE) is an inclusive, community-led charity that enables people of all ages and abilities to experience, learn and benefit from the natural world in a safe and friendly environment. The centre provides outdoor education sessions across Ayrshire with its mobile facilities. They have many community initiatives that work towards the betterment of the region. Adventure Carrick, their commercial arm, supports the development of their work.

Get in touch with Adventure Carrick
adventurecarrick.com
T **01465 710077**
E **hello@adventurecarrick.com**

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.

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