

# 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 Troon.

Lifeboat stations in Girvan and Troon, LifeBoat Phone: 999

# South Ayrshire Snorkel Trail

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W scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/snorkel-trails

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**Adventure Carrick**  
Guided snorkel sessions and wetsuit hire  
adventurecarrick.com

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

**Troon Water Sports Hub**  
Cafe and wetsuit hire

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



scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

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# Dive in to Scotland's Living Seas!



## Snorkel Trail South Ayrshire

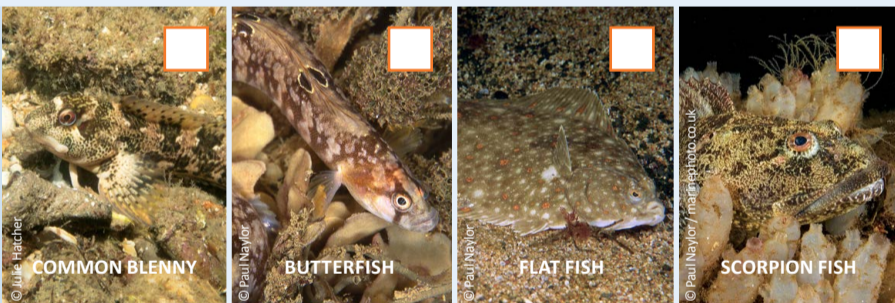
In association with



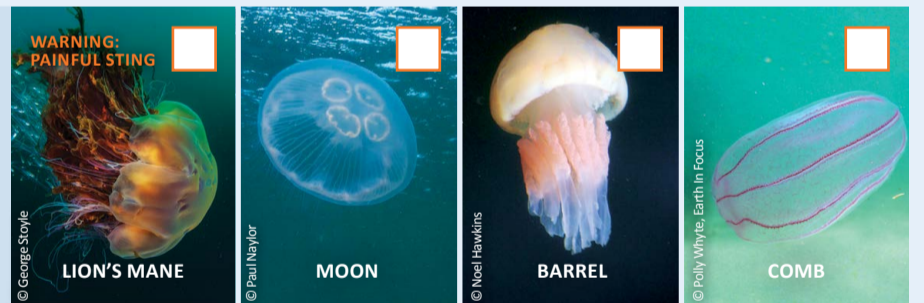
# Life under the waves

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:

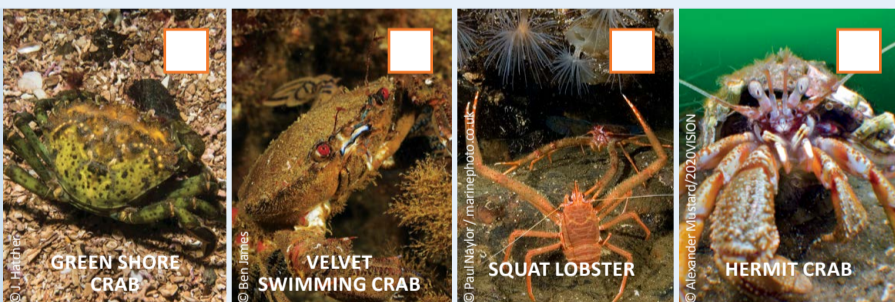
## Fish



## Jellyfish



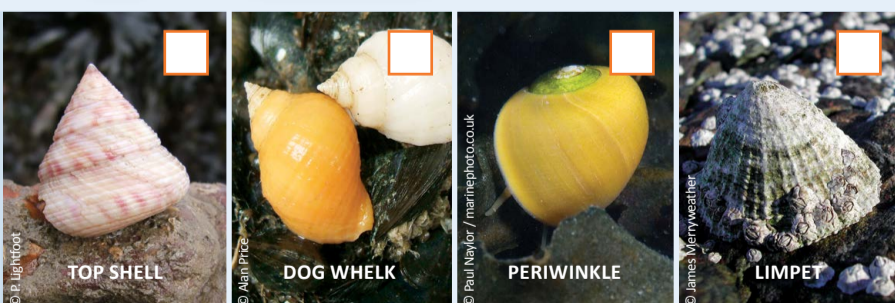
## Crustaceans



## Starfish and Urchins



## Molluscs (common and horse)



## 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!



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

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.

3



### 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.

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.

2



### Horse Rocks

**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.

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. Culzean beach, accessible from the Swan Pond car park, offers a short walk past the Pagoda and down steps to a popular sandy beach with rocky outcrops and sea cave. Gas House Bay, near the visitor centre (Home Farm), provides steps and an accessible route to the sandy shore below Culzean Castle. An ideal site for beginners, with a jaw-dropping backdrop. Watch out for seals; a small rocky skerry off the bay is a favoured spot of theirs. Please note paid entry to the Park is required.

6



### Ballast Bank

**MAP:** NS310309  
**NEAREST VILLAGE:** Troon

Ballast bank is accessed from the old slipway situated near the parking area at the north of the bank. Set within the town scape with all the usual public amenities, this unusual snorkel site lends itself perfectly for snorkelling. 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 path and please do not walk along the sea wall; this has a steep drop to rocks below.

## 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. A hidden world of marine treasures awaits, with coastal waters teeming with marine life as well as in some places semi-precious stones including agate, jasper and even amethyst.

Search below while you are surrounded above by historical features as well as geological formations of no less than 350 million years old, dating back to Neolithic times. 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  
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**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](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkeltrail)

**Key**



Toilets



Shop



Bus



Parking



Café



Train



Beginner



Advanced