

# tidelines

Winter 2011

Newsletter of the Solway Firth Partnership

Issue 35

## Cetaceans in the Solway

More than 50 bottlenose dolphins seen this summer – Page 17



**The Dee Eel Restoration Project** Galloway Fisheries Trust give eels a helping hand – Page 6 & 7



**The Wild Oceans Project** Why we should buy more local, sustainably caught fish – Page 20



# tidelines CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Gordon Mann OBE.  
Chairman Solway Firth Partnership

**W**ELCOME to the winter edition of Tidelines which includes a brief overview of our accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2011. The Partnership operates as an independent charitable company and, as such, is subject to many of the pressures of any small business. However, we are delighted to report that, despite the challenging economic climate, our operation remains viable. To achieve this, we are reliant on the continued support of many long-standing funding partners as well as the contributions of new organisations. We are very grateful to all our funders but must make specific mention of the substantial support we have received from Scottish Natural Heritage over the years. SNH was instrumental in founding the Partnership eighteen years ago and has been central to our operation ever since. While we continue to work closely with all our partners, including SNH, from 1 April of this year,

this element of funding has been replaced by a contribution from Marine Scotland. The role of the Partnership in the long term remains subject to debate given current consideration of the structure and governance of Marine Planning Partnerships under the Scottish Marine Act and the way in which this might affect our operation. The position is particularly complex for the Solway Firth, as ever, given our cross border situation and the importance of ensuring we consider the needs of the area as a whole. In the meantime, we continue to work hard to minimise costs while providing a professional and relevant service in changing times.

As part of the work Marine Scotland has commissioned us to carry out to inform future marine planning, we are now concluding our study of Sectoral Interactions in the Solway Firth. This work aims to provide an overview of the main types of activity in the area and their compatibility with one another. The broad-scale nature of this work is recognised but it nonetheless acts as a useful scoping exercise and a step towards more integrated planning and management for the Solway Firth in future. The approach has been replicated around the coast of Scotland and so helps to illustrate regional variations in results.

We have also been pleased to facilitate stakeholder engagement in the recent Scottish Government consultation on fisheries management in Luce Bay and Sands Special Area of Conservation. Establishing management measures that meet the nature conservation requirements of the site while enabling its sustainable use is a challenging task but one which we have been pleased to help work towards. A series of well attended meetings have been held recently to inform this process and we look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders as management proposals are refined.

Finally, at the time of writing, our conference in Maryport on 11 November, in partnership with Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is almost upon us and we have been delighted by the response from such a wide range of interests. Professor Ted Cowan of University of Glasgow will explore the history of this frontier land in his keynote address and we look forward to a series of lively and informative sessions throughout the day. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

*Gordon*

Solway Firth  
Partnership

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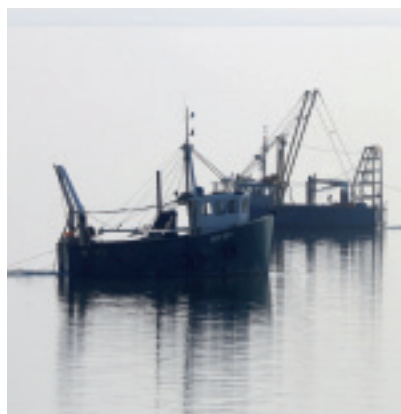
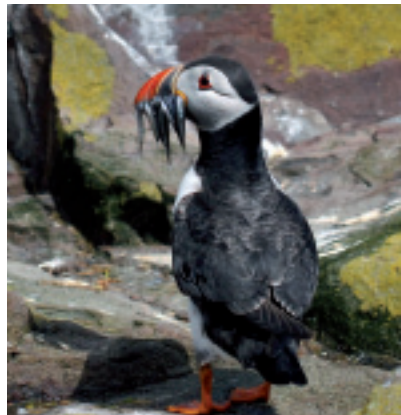


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**Page 4** – NW Coast, Puffin credit copyright Marine Management Organisation, 2011; **Page 5** – Sea anemones, Marine Scotland; **Page 6/7** – Adult eel, checking trap, elvers in net, credit Galloway Fisheries Trust; **Page 8/9** – Thrift at RSPB Crook of Baldoon, credit Paul Tarling; **Page 10/11** – Saltom Pit, credit National Trust; **Page 12** – Balcary Heughs Cliff, credit Keith Kirk; **Pages 14/15** – Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, credit Debbie Parke, Nith Catchment Fishery Trust and Zebra mussel, credit crown copyright 2009 GBNNSS; **Page 16** – Grey seal, credit Keith Kirk; **Page 17** – Bottle nose Dolphin, credit Keith Kirk; **Page 18** – Fishing boats, credit www.alancaimsphotography.com; **Page 19** – Mull of Galloway Lighthouse, Lindesnes Lighthouse credit Northern Lighthouse; **Page 20** – Wild Oceans Project Officer, credit Cumbria Wildlife Trust; **Page 22/23** – Barnacle Geese credit Keith Kirk; Beach Litter pick credit Solway Coast AONB.

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# MARINE PLANNING UPDATE

Since the last issue, development of marine plans in the East of England has continued, with new online information and workshops being announced.

The inshore and offshore areas from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe have been selected as the first in England for marine planning, a new system to help manage the huge demands on space in and around our seas. Now an online and interactive map of our seas, the marine planning portal, is live and allows anyone logging on to understand how busy our seas have become and play an active part in marine planning. This can be seen at: [www.planningportal.marinemangement.org.uk](http://www.planningportal.marinemangement.org.uk)

A range of information and locations – from details of wind farm developments to conservation areas – have been added to the portal, and it is hoped that as many people as possible take a look, comment on the data and suggest any more information that could be included.

Using the controls, you can locate and then zoom in on particular areas or activities by selecting the specific data you want to see. Users can post comments, make suggestions and submit new data to inform the plans in the East of England, which are expected to take two years to finalise.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have also released the first commissioned study of socio-economic factors in marine planning. The study, conducted independently, is a new resource that helps marine planners, developers, local authorities and others with an interest in sustainable development in the marine area to understand various issues affecting coastal communities. It takes a national snapshot of the socio-economic factors currently driving coastal communities in England, from planned developments to tourism, and then looks in more detail at the East of England, the area where the first two marine plans are currently being developed.

The information used to produce the study comes from a variety of sources, including local planning documentation and figures verified by the Office for National Statistics. You can read more at [www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/se.htm](http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/se.htm)

The MMO will be running a series of workshops in the East of England over the coming year which will provide opportunities for others, including those who are not online, to have their say. In addition, a full consultation will be run in autumn 2012, once draft marine plans are prepared.

You can stay in touch with the latest workshops and other news by signing up to our marine planning newsletter – just email [planning@marinemangement.org.uk](mailto:planning@marinemangement.org.uk) with your details.

For more information on marine planning, and a map of the plan areas, visit [www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning](http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning). You can also contact the planning team by telephone on 0191 376 2790 or email: [planning@marinemangement.org.uk](mailto:planning@marinemangement.org.uk)

## MARINE PLANNING | in Scotland

There's always a lot going on with marine planning but it's probably fair to say that things are particularly busy as 2012 heads towards us. Marine Scotland, the Scottish Government's Directorate in charge of the planning and management of Scotland's marine resources, has spent 2011 implementing the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, which introduced new elements designed to provide an integrated approach to the effective planning, management and use of our seas. Chief amongst these are a marine planning regime, a revised licensing process and the development of a network of Marine Protected Areas to help deliver biological diversity and ecological coherence.

Within each aspect, Marine Scotland is working hard to ensure progress: the position in October 2011 is:

### National Marine Plan:

The pre-consultation draft of the National Marine Plan (NMP) was published in March and over 80 responses were submitted. A revised version is in the process of being drafted, taking many of the comments received into account. Respondents felt that the Plan should be more 'spatial' in its tone and direction and, while this may not be possible across all sectors, Marine Scotland is trying to accommodate spatial information where possible in the revised chapters. In Scottish waters, there will be a single marine plan from Mean High Water Springs right out to 200 nautical miles. Since this area covers uses and activities that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament as well as those that are reserved to Westminster, Whitehall Departments need to be satisfied with the Plan's proposals. The NMP will be re-issued for formal consultation after this additional liaison with Westminster.

### Regional Marine Planning:

The successful consultation exercise in February 2011 indicated that whilst some people questioned the need for regional marine planning in Scotland, the majority were in favour of its introduction. A decision on potential boundaries, leading on from the options presented in the consultation paper, should be announced before the end of the year.

### Marine Planning Partnerships:

The Scottish Coastal Forum engaged Edinburgh lawyers Dundas & Wilson to consider how Marine Planning Partnerships might be set up in order to comply with the Marine (Scotland) Act. Their report will shortly be presented to Marine Scotland for consideration.

### Marine Licensing:

Some amendments to the licensing provisions are under consideration in late 2011. For further details, see the consultation page at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/exemptions](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/exemptions).

### Marine Protected Areas:

Marine Protected Areas: The development of the Marine Protection Area network is being undertaken in collaboration with marine stakeholders. Marine Scotland has held a number of workshops throughout 2011, which include discussions on locations which are considered to be 'least damaged/more natural'. Maps of these areas are available online at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/295194/0120606.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/295194/0120606.pdf) and will be updated where appropriate.

As with any new big policy, the introduction of marine planning is challenging to get right. Scotland is pursuing a ground-breaking agenda and Marine Scotland is working hard with stakeholders to ensure that the different elements come together to deliver sustainable use and protection of our coastal and marine resources.







# THE DEE EEL RESTORATION PROJECT

The European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) has a complex life history which is believed to begin in spring and early summer in the Sargasso Sea, 5000 km from Scotland. Within a few days of spawning, eel eggs change into transparent blade-shaped larvae 'leptocephali', which passively drift to Europe on the Gulf Stream and the North-Atlantic Drift. Once they are old enough (5mm), they undertake active vertical migration behaviour - diving deep during daylight hours but coming back to the surface at night. From November to April, after 8-9 months in the Atlantic, 'leptocephali' reach European waters and develop into 'glass eels' (50 mm long, un-pigmented). Glass eels initially live in coastal waters, darkening to yellow-brown when they become known as 'elvers'. Once near river mouths and when they have darkened sufficiently, elvers start to migrate upstream when the river temperature is between 10 and 12°C, generally around the end of April.

Due to a sharp decline in the population by more than 90% since the 1970's, European eels are now categorised as Critically Endangered in the International Union for Conservation

of Nature (IUCN) Red List. This has prompted interest in the species over the last few years and immediate action to help conserve the species was addressed within the Solway Tweed River Basin District Eel Management Plan published in 2009.

The Plan draws together the available data on eels in the Solway area and makes recommendations to protect and enhance the eel population. The report highlights that although the Kirkcudbrightshire Dee is the second largest river catchment in South West Scotland (>1000 km<sup>2</sup>), annual electrofishing surveys by the Galloway Fisheries Trust (GFT) have never found an eel in the Dee or its tributaries since the surveys started in 1996. Historically, before the construction of the Galloway Hydro Scheme in the mid 1930's, the Dee supported a healthy eel population.

At the bottom of the Dee, Tongland Dam lies 1.7 km upstream of the tidal limit. Migratory fish entering the river must pass through a narrow river channel to reach the entrance to a fish pass. In July 2009, when undertaking routine maintenance,

GFT staff saw many thousands of eels trying to ascend the lowermost chambers of the pass with no success.

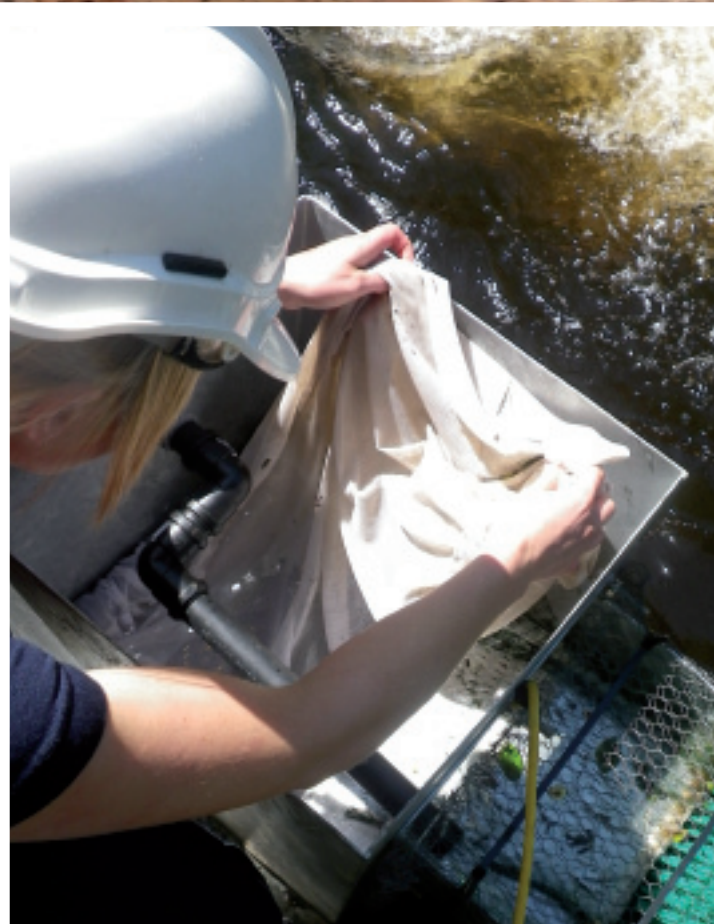
Whilst the Plan's main focus is to help increase by 40% the number of adult eels going to sea to spawn, all remedial actions were considered at each of the freshwater life stages and for the Dee this would focus first on overcoming inward migration problems. Ideally, GFT would like to assist eels in migrating above Tongland Dam unaided but this would require building an extensive eel ladder which would be costly. Capturing eels by trapping and transporting them upstream of Tongland Dam was seen as the best option and was trialled successfully in 2010.

In 2011 with the support of Scottish Government, Scottish Power, Solway Heritage and Shanks Waste Solutions through the Landfill Communities Fund, GFT purchased, fitted and ran two eel traps below the downstream entrance to Tongland fish pass. These have run from May to the end of September with all eels relocated into small burns with good habitat above the dam. It is hoped that the small eels will grow and eventually disperse from the burns into the vast River Dee where they may stay up to 20 years or more before migrating to sea to spawn.

Aside from the benefits to biodiversity that re-establishing a Dee Eel Population will play, eels are known to be voracious predators of young North American Signal Crayfish of which the Dee has the largest Scottish population. North American Signal Crayfish are non-native alien species that are extremely destructive to native flora and fauna and will consume plant matter, invertebrates, fish and fish eggs. On the Dee, their population has increased massively in recent years e.g. a trapping experiment in 2009 caught over 700,000 individuals in only a few months. This population is out of control and is having a severe biodiversity and economic impact on local fish stocks. Scottish Power, GFT and the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board are presently implementing a Salmon Restoration Plan to try and restore a healthy salmon population back to the Dee but the continued spread and growth of the signal crayfish population threatens this objective. Trapping is able to remove the older age classes of crayfish but the younger stages cannot be controlled by this method. The establishment of an eel population is seen as an essential measure to bring the Dee crayfish population down to a level which will allow natural flora and fauna to co-exist.

Scottish Power and GFT have applied for additional funding to support the development of this project over the next few years.

Galloway Fisheries Trust  
[www.gallowayfisheriestrust.org](http://www.gallowayfisheriestrust.org)







# Crook of Baldoon

It has been a very special year for watching the cycle of the tides and animals on a new reserve; it is very much like going back to school with so much that you thought you understood about the natural world and in fact finding that, in some cases, your understanding is challenged.

Things are starting to move apace towards an ultimate transition to a fantastic visitor attraction. Most of the monitoring of tides, soil moisture and salinity is done. The topographic mapping of the surface of the proposed wet grassland is complete and October 2011 will see the completion of the first stage of the re-wetting process.

There were a number of notable events this year, not least the successful breeding of lapwings with six pairs nesting and 12 chicks fledging; this may not seem that special but this is the starting point and hopefully things can only get better. The new wetland should allow for better results across the area with, hopefully, redshank breeding as well as snipe and oystercatcher also utilising the area. The linnets, goldfinches and skylarks have had a good year. The skylarks had 22 singing males across the Crook and adjacent land – there is nothing like the song of a skylark to lift the heart.

On a sadder note for Wigtown Bay as a whole is the loss of the three osprey chicks - one to the amount of energy it expended to exit the shell and the shell membrane that stuck to it, and the other lost three days after fledging. It is usually twelve days before a young osprey can fend for itself so it is more than likely that JC (colour ring identification) had become disoriented and unfortunately lost. However, on a positive note its sibling JD did very well, fledged, became independent and migrated south hopefully to return to the area in a couple of years' time once mature.

The thrift this year was exceptional to say the least as can be seen pictured left.

RSPB has been delighted and surprised by the number of volunteers the reserve has attracted. This has ranged from helping with visitors in the osprey room at the Wigtown County Buildings to hands-on estate work on the Crook itself with fence line removal and repair, making two gateways and repairs to the reserve roadway to the car park, although the road down to the entrance still has to be improved.

The volunteers have also helped at our other reserves at the Mull of Galloway and Wood of Cree for which the Society and Galloway Reserves must express most sincere thanks.

There are a number of walks that are taking place on the Crook this winter including dawn flights of geese for the early risers.

Phone 01988 402130 for details.  
Paul Tarling, RSPB Crook of Baldoon Nature Reserve



# The Whitehaven Coast Project

Secures its  
Financial Future

Over the past 6 years the National Trust and the Land Trust have been working together with Copeland Borough Council to manage some of their land south of Whitehaven Harbour.

The area is studded with historical gems such as the iconic Candlestick and Haig Colliery, the last deep mine to close in Cumbria (now a museum). Also close by are the King Pit which was the deepest mine in the world when in use, the remains of Wellington Pit and several reminders of the rich industrial past.

The walk along this stretch of coast overlooks the magnificent harbour and Saltom Pit (the first entirely undersea coal mine) and gives fine views of St Bee's north head beyond Saltom and Barrowmouth Bays.

Amidst the ancient monuments and listed buildings, nature is thriving. The poor soils allow a multitude of wildflowers and coastal heath to spread along the cliffs. Birds of prey keep watch over the old mines with kestrels and barn owls making them their homes. The lack of livestock and good paths make the area a preferred dog walking location.

For the last 3 years the The National Trust has had a presence on site and has helped to shape many of the developments along the coast. This year an endowment from government to improve former colliery sites was granted to the Land Trust who leases the land from Copeland Borough Council thereby securing the future of the project.

Ranger Chris Gomersall said "It's a very exciting time to be working on the coast. Coastal access, marine protected areas and local initiatives mean that there is always something on which people can have an input. It's also very rewarding to hear people say how much the area has improved recently."

Future plans include involving the community with the development of the site with planting, signage, boundary repairs, a nature trail and events. Building on the many successes to date, the future looks good for the Whitehaven coast.

For further information please contact: [chris.gomersall@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:chris.gomersall@nationaltrust.org.uk)



images  
of Stephen's Seats

Image: Saltom Pit





This view of Balcary Heughs cliff from the sea reveals the dramatic coast found in the East Stewartry Coast National Scenic Area below the popular footpath between Rascarrel and Balcary Bay. The sea has carved up the hard greywacke rocks forming the sea stack of Lot's Wife and providing ledges favoured by nesting sea birds. In fact these maritime cliffs are nationally important for their sea birds with breeding colonies of cormorants, guillemots and razorbills. In contrast to the indented cliffs a perfect line of smooth black lichen colonises rocks on the splash zone above the high water mark. Iron Age people made good use of the undulating landform by building hill forts on the high points to the left of Balcary Point at Adams Chair and Big Airds Hill.



# BALCARY HEUGHS CLIFF



# ALIENS IN THE SOLWAY



Himalayan Balsam



Zebra mussel



North American signal crayfish

Throughout history a variety of species have been taken from their native habitats and introduced or imported into new ones. There are various factors that have enabled this to occur, from accidental introduction through the movement of contaminated water to exploiting qualities, such as faster growth, to benefit aquaculture. In some cases, introductions have even taken place to help preserve our natural habitat, or at least that was the intention.

In the past these introductions took place without any understanding of the potential consequences and in most cases we have gotten away with it. The 'tens rule' estimates that 10% of introductions will establish a breeding population although only 10% of those will cause problems through invasion. It is only in recent years that the consequence of introducing species into new areas has become apparent and there is a growing awareness of the problems associated with the introduction of non-native species, especially those that are invasive. Efforts are being taken to control and eradicate them where possible. In the UK alone over £2 billion is spent annually as a result of invasive species.

The watercourses that drain into the Solway and the Solway itself are at threat from a number of invasive species. Some of these are already here, such as Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). These species were introduced to gardens as ornamental plants in the 1800s and have now escaped into the wild, are colonising the banks of most rivers in Dumfries and Galloway and reducing the native biodiversity. There have been a number of introductions originating from North America and Asia, including the American mink (*Mustela vison*), North American signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) and

Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*). They are now well established or establishing and having damaging impacts on our native species and habitats. In order for a new species to establish, the habitat needs to be similar to its own native habitat and it needs to be able to utilise the resources available to it. In most cases, 'successful' introductions are either predators or competitors.

Whilst we battle with those alien species that have already become established, we have to be aware that other non-native species are threatening to invade. These species include the Carpet sea-squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*), a highly invasive marine animal native to Japan, which smothers other marine life and could cause problems for industries such as fishing and aquaculture. It was found to be present in the Firth of Clyde in 2010 and due to its ability to thrive in shallow waters such as those found in marinas, can spread on the hulls of boats. Another species that is of concern is the Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*), which threatens both marine and freshwater habitats and whose burrowing

tendencies, similar to those of the American signal crayfish, increase bank erosion and water turbidity. They also predate on native species of invertebrates and will consume fish eggs. All of these species can cause an imbalance in native ecosystems resulting in reduced biodiversity.

In response to these threats, individual catchment focused biosecurity plans have been drawn up by many Fishery Trusts throughout Scotland with the aims of prevention, detection, control and eradication of invasive non-native species. If you would like more information on these biosecurity plans, contact the local Fishery or River Trust who will be able to advise you.

Debbie Parke, Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

[www.river-nith.com](http://www.river-nith.com)





# CUMBRIA BIODIVERSITY DATA CENTRE LAUNCHED



The restyled Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre was officially launched on Saturday 22nd October 2011 at the Cumbria Wildlife Recorders Conference.

The Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre at Tullie House Museum, Carlisle keeps wildlife information for the county of Cumbria. Tullie House Museum, in its role as a local natural history museum, has collected and disseminated records of wildlife in Cumbria since its inception in 1893. From the early 1990s the Museum has developed a computerised database of species and habitat records in Cumbria and has taken the central role in providing a local biodiversity data service for the county. This role was restyled as Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre in 2010, a not-for-profit organisation hosted by Tullie House Museum and advised by local stakeholders. A restyled website showcasing the fauna of Cumbria has also been set up to allow the public greater access to this information.

The public can help the Centre build up a better picture of Cumbria's local wildlife by adding to the 400,000 records already collected and enable more effective nature conservation in the region. The Centre is interested in any information on the whereabouts of wildlife in Cumbria.

## AN UNUSUAL RECORD – A PORPOISE IN THE RIVER ESK

Construction workers renovating the Metal Bridge Inn on the banks of the River Esk near Carlisle this summer were treated to an unusual sighting of a Harbour porpoise. The porpoise, which was presumed to have been chasing fish into the river with the tide, stayed behind when the water retreated, appearing to be stranded in a deep pool of water in the river. Harbour porpoises inhabit the waters all around the UK and it is not unusual for them to swim inland. However, sightings are rare as they don't tend to make the splash that a dolphin does. So unless the water is very calm it can be difficult to spot them. The porpoise, which feeds on sand eel and herring, had moved back out to sea by the next day.

### Report your sightings

Visit [www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk](http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk)  
or e-mail [nature@tulliehouse.co.uk](mailto:nature@tulliehouse.co.uk)  
to learn more about recording Cumbria's wildlife.

# CETACEANS — IN THE SOLWAY

Whales, dolphins and porpoises – collectively known as cetaceans – are regular visitors to Dumfries and Galloway Waters. Indeed some are present all year round. However compared to the deeper waters of NW Scotland the shallow waters of the Solway Firth and west Galloway coast mean that the diversity of species found around our shores is relatively small.

Harbour Porpoises are the most commonly encountered species, most often found as individuals or small groups. They occur throughout the north Solway, and being tolerant of more shallow waters may sometimes be encountered in the upper reaches of the estuary. Only a small number of sightings were reported in summer 2011, mainly from prominent headlands of the Mull of Galloway, Castle Point and Corsewall Point on the tip of the Rhins.

Dolphins are porpoises' larger, more active cousins, and are far less frequently encountered off the Dumfries and Galloway Coast. Nonetheless, July 2011 unusually saw a large pod of Bottlenose Dolphins numbering 50-70 individuals spotted off the mouth of Kirkcudbright Bay by fishermen who watched the pod actively feeding on a school of mullet. Bottlenose Dolphins are one of the largest dolphin species occurring in SW Scotland and are much more likely to breach (leap clear of the water) than their porpoise relatives. The pod provided suitable entertainment for the observers who photographed them regularly breaching. The smaller Common Dolphin can also occur occasionally, though no sightings were reported this summer.

Although small in whale terms, Minke Whales are the largest species regularly occurring in SW Scotland. They prefer deeper waters, and are most likely to be spotted off the western coast of Galloway, though even here they are not particularly frequent. A most unusual encounter was reported by fishermen in Luce Bay when checking their lobster pots. Entangled amongst the pot ropes was a Minke Whale, and after more than an hour struggling with the ropes the fishermen were able to release the animal which swam away apparently unharmed. A lucky escape for this individual, as such entanglements can sometimes be fatal.

Although not a cetacean, Basking Sharks – the second largest fish in the world – are also occasionally reported off our coast. They follow the plankton blooms up the western coast of the UK. Summer 2011 saw only a handful of reports, mainly from Corsewall Point and Mull of Galloway.



Bottlenose Dolphin

### Report your sightings

Sightings of marine mammals should be reported to the local records centre DGERC, including details of species (if known), date and location. Reports of stranded animals (alive or dead) can also be reported to the Centre who will pass on the information to the national strandings investigation programme.  
DGERC, Studio 1, Hillhead Mill, Kirkcubright, Dumfries DG2 8LA  
Email: [info@dgerc.org.uk](mailto:info@dgerc.org.uk) Telephone: 01387 760274



# MARYPORT FISHING COMPANY

The name may have changed recently but it is business as usual for Maryport Fishing Company Limited (formerly Maryport and Solway Fishing Co-operative).

The co-operative was formed by 6 fishermen, working out of Maryport in the mid-1980s, who felt they could get better prices for their catch if they sold directly to the market rather than through buyers. In 1997 the co-operative was able to move into purpose built premises and say goodbye to the temporary chiller wagons and offices on the quayside.

At its peak the co-operative had up to 20 fishermen working as share owners of the company but in line with the general decline in boat numbers this has now dwindled to 8 full time members. The Maryport boats fish across the whole of the northern Irish Sea and into the Solway. Their main catch is prawns in the summer and scallops in the winter with a wide variety of other fish landed as by-catch.

Although there are no processing plants for the prawns and scallops in Cumbria there is plenty of choice elsewhere and the company will constantly be changing the destination depending on the best price it can get for the Maryport fishermen. For fish they mainly use the market at Fleetwood. The nearest alternatives such as Grimsby and Peterhead mean significantly higher transport costs. Although now a company, it is still run in a democratic way. There are not many 'fishing co-operatives' in the UK and so far Maryport is the only one in Cumbria.

As well as being a great benefit to the share owning fishermen, Maryport Fishing Company also benefits local consumers by

selling fish through their shop on the quayside, appropriately named 'The Catch'. The shop draws in customers from a wide area, with regulars coming from as far as Penrith and Millom. Some only buy in the winter coming specifically for the scallops. The Catch's customers will often phone ahead when they know the boats are due in and are willing to experiment with different fish depending on what is caught.

In the summer the boats are landing every day and they keep the shop supplied with fish. In the winter the boats are away from Maryport for longer spells, landing their scallops on the Isle of Man before bringing the last catch of the trip back to Maryport. The shop buys in processed fish such as smoked salmon and top up species when the supply from their own boats falls. Inevitably with the composition of each landing changing, the price customers are charged will vary. For example as winter progresses and more scallops are caught the price will tumble. The prices for fish such as brill, turbot, Dover sole and langoustine are often lower than supermarket prices and so The Catch's customers benefit from their local supplier.

The company was set up to work as a co-operative over 20 years ago with the sole aim of striving to get the best price for the fish landed by its members at Maryport and it still is.



## Mull of Galloway Lighthouse – A Meeting of Similar Minds

The Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) and the South Rhins Community Development Trust (SRCDT) have just hosted a two day workshop at the Mull of Galloway Lighthouse to look at ways of linking four unique lighthouse sites to enhance the cultural and heritage links and to investigate joint funding opportunities. Local representatives from SRCDT, RSPB and Solway Firth Partnership attended. A group from Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum in Norway and a representative of the North Ronaldsay Trust in Orkney travelled considerable distances to attend. Unfortunately the Hook Heritage Centre in Ireland was not represented.

The first day started with the SRCDT introducing the development of the Mull of Galloway Lighthouse site over the last 12 years. The SRCDT now manages the Visitor Centre, Lighthouse Tours and the Exhibition including the old Fog Signal Engine Room. Andrew Bielinski of the RSPB then presented a history of the RSPB's involvement on the site. Prior to the development of facilities at the Mull of Galloway around 20,000 people visited the area each year. This has now increased to 60,000 with visitors having more to do and staying longer in the area which is positive for the local community.

A guided tour of the site included visiting the redundant Fog Signal below the lighthouse where a viewing platform has been erected for watching the cliff nesting birds. For those unable to reach the platform pictures are relayed from remote cameras to screens in the RSPB visitor centre. The tour of the site ended with a visit to the Exhibition which has been developed by the SRCDT within the non-operational areas of the lighthouse compound.

Later in the day Pam Taylor talked about the work of the Solway Firth Partnership and Nic Coombey provided an overview of his involvement throughout the development of the Mull of Galloway project with his work at Solway Heritage.

The Norwegian team produced an excellent presentation looking at all aspects of a lighthouse visitor attraction including identifying the audience; design - from exhibitions to signage; retail opportunities - from catering to lighthouse models; education and funding - all important aspects of managing 80,000 visitors to a designated National Lighthouse Museum at the most southerly point of Norway.

The second day started with Bob McIntosh of the NLB describing his involvement in the heritage of Historic Lighthouses. Sinclair Scott of the North Ronaldsay Trust then gave examples of projects including the development of the 1845 redundant lighthouse property at North Ronaldsay and future restoration of the original 18th century tower and associated buildings. The 1854 properties included the former light keepers' cottages which have been refurbished as self-catering accommodation. There is also a visitor centre with cafe, gift shop, bike hire, lighthouse exhibition and wool mill. The original beacon on site was established in 1789 by the NLB and is Scotland's oldest intact lighthouse.

The workshop drew to a close with a discussion, chaired by Ian Webster, NLB on achieving co-operation between the four sites, enhancing the cultural and heritage links. Ideas ranged from exchange of website information to linked exhibitions and retail opportunities.

All agreed it was a worthwhile event with all attendees enjoying the short visit.

For more information contact:

Bob McIntosh, Northern Lighthouse Board [bobm@nlb.org.uk](mailto:bobm@nlb.org.uk)  
or Ian Webster, Northern Lighthouse Board – [ianw@nlb.org.uk](mailto:ianw@nlb.org.uk)

Northern Lighthouse Board - [www.nlb.org.uk/](http://www.nlb.org.uk/)  
South Rhins Community Development Trust - [www.mull-of-galloway.co.uk/](http://www.mull-of-galloway.co.uk/)  
Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum (Norway) [www.lindesnesfyr.no/](http://www.lindesnesfyr.no/)  
Hook Heritage Centre (Ireland). [www.hookheritage.ie/](http://www.hookheritage.ie/)  
The North Ronaldsay Trust. [www.northronaldsaytrust.co.uk/](http://www.northronaldsaytrust.co.uk/)



Mull of Galloway Lighthouse

Lindesnes Lighthouse, Norway









November

Saturday 5	<b>Feathery Fireworks with RSPB</b> 2.30pm – 4.00pm Booking: Not Required	Come and see the spectacular displays of nature as big flocks of birds gather on the reserve. <b>Contact:</b> Becky Jones 01387 780579 <a href="mailto:mersehead@rspb.org.uk">mersehead@rspb.org.uk</a> <b>Meet:</b> RSPB Mersehead, Southwick, DG2 8AH, NX925561
Sunday 6	<b>WWT - What's that goose?</b> 1.00pm – 4.00pm Booking: Essential	Join the WWT experts to find and identify geese and other species of wildfowl on the reserve. <b>Contact:</b> WWT 01387 770200 <b>Meet:</b> WWT Caerlaverock Wetland Centre, Eastpark Farm, Glencaple, Dumfries, DG1 4RS, NY052657
Wednesday 9	<b>The Solway Coast</b> 7.30pm – 9.00pm Booking: Not Required	Graeme Proud will share his knowledge of the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. He has responsibility for managing the internationally significant estuarine habitats of open marsh, wetlands and dunes. £2.00 entry for adults, children over age 10 are welcome. <b>Contact:</b> Chris Barnfield 01697 746832 <b>Meet:</b> The Moot Hall, Bampton
Thursday 10	<b>Conservation Work Party at Bowness-on-Solway Nature Reserve</b> Booking: Essential	Join the regular team of volunteers who carry out practical work on this nature reserve every Thursday. Some work on scrub control will be followed by a walk around the reserve with the Honorary Reserve Manager. Minimum age 16, bring appropriate work clothing. <b>Contact:</b> Kevin Scott 01288 829575 <b>Meet:</b> Bowness-on-Solway Nature Reserve entrance gate, NY206617
Friday 11	<b>Solway Firth Partnership and Solway Coast AONB Joint Conference '11</b> 11.00am – 3.45pm (with SFP AGM at 10.00am) Booking required.	Professor Ted Cowan of University of Glasgow will provide the keynote address and the programme will include Irish Sea Marine Conservation zones, Solway landscapes and seascapes, marine life, renewable energy, sea fisheries, maritime heritage and coastal recreation. <b>Contact:</b> <a href="mailto:info@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk">info@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk</a> or 01387 702161 <a href="mailto:sue.mcmillan@allerdale.gov.uk">sue.mcmillan@allerdale.gov.uk</a> or 016973 33055. <b>Meet:</b> The Wave, Maryport, Cumbria.
Sunday 13	<b>WWT Dawn Flights</b> 6.30am – 9.00am Booking: Essential	Join the wardens as they open early to experience the wild geese flying against the dawn sky. The Coffee shop will also be open early to provide hot drinks and bacon rolls. Bring warm, waterproof clothing, binoculars and a torch. Normal admission charges apply, WWT members free (catering not included in price). <b>Contact:</b> WWT 01387 770200 <b>Meet:</b> WWT Caerlaverock Wetland Centre, Eastpark Farm, Glencaple, DG1 4RS, NY052657
Sunday 13 Sunday 27	<b>RSPB Crook of Baldoon Guided Walk</b> 12.00noon – 2.00pm Booking: Not required	Catch the tide with the warden for an informative walk through the reserve. Learn about the resident wildlife and RSPB's on-going conservation work. Take binoculars and walking boots. <b>Contact:</b> Paul Tarling 01988 402130 <b>Meet:</b> Crook of Baldoon cark park, DG8 9AQ, NX445530
Monday 14	<b>Volunteer Recruitment and Slide Show</b> 3.00pm Booking: Not required	Come along and meet Graeme Proud, the AONB Volunteer Coordinator, who will give a talk about the work that the volunteer group get involved in within the Solway Coast AONB. With many projects on-going we are always keen to talk to anyone who is interested in the conservation of this beautiful area. <b>Contact:</b> Graeme Proud, AONB Unit 016973 33055 <b>Meet:</b> The Discovery Centre, Sillioth
Wednesday 16	<b>Crosscanonby Carr Reserve Workday</b> 10.30am Booking: Not Required	As part of our ongoing management of this Reserve we will be carrying out the annual haymaking task along with routine maintenance of trees, paths, ponds and hedgerows. All tools will be provided, please bring a packed lunch and suitable clothing <b>Contact:</b> Graeme Proud, AONB Unit 016973 33055 <b>Meet:</b> Crosscanonby Carr Reserve, or on beach front car park on the B5300.
Wednesday 23	<b>Wolsty To Beckfoot Beach Litter Pick</b> 10.30am – 12.30pm Booking: Not Required	We will be litter picking towards Beckfoot. All equipment will be provided, but please wear suitable clothing and footwear. <b>Meet:</b> Wolsty Road End Car Park <b>Contact:</b> Graeme Proud, AONB Unit 016973 33055



December

Friday 2	<b>Guided Circular Walk from Old Sandsfield to Edward 1st Monument</b> 12.00noon Booking: Not required	Come along and join in a pleasant stroll to the historic Edward 1st Monument and learn a little more about the history of his life with Volunteer Coordinator, Graeme Proud. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear. Ground can be uneven and distance is roughly 3 miles. <b>Contact:</b> Graeme Proud, AONB Unit 016973 33055 <b>Meet:</b> The 'Greyhound' pub in Burgh by Sands
Thursday 8	<b>Bowness Common Reserve Workday, RSPB</b> 9.30am – 1.00pm Booking: Essential	Join the RSPB and AONB Volunteers to remove scrub from the Reserve. All tools will be provided but please wear suitable clothing and bring a packed lunch. <b>Contact:</b> Graeme Proud, the AONB Unit 016973 33055 <b>Meet:</b> Bowness-on-Solway Nature Reserve entrance gate, NY206617
Saturday 10 Sunday 11	<b>RSPB Christmas Craft Fair</b> 10.00am – 3.00pm Booking: Not required	Come to along to the Sulwath Centre and browse a selection of stalls from local crafters and producers. <b>Contact:</b> Becky Jones 01387 780 579 <a href="mailto:mersehead@rspb.org.uk">mersehead@rspb.org.uk</a> <b>Meet:</b> RSPB Mersehead, Southwick, DG2 8AH, NX925561
Sunday 11	<b>WWT Dawn Flights</b> 7.00am – 9.00am Booking: Essential	Join the wardens as they open early to experience the wild geese flying in against the dawn sky. The Coffee shop will also be open early to provide hot drinks and bacon rolls. Bring warm, waterproof clothing, binoculars and a torch. Normal admission charges apply, WWT members free (catering not included in price). <b>Contact:</b> WWT 01387 770200 <b>Meet:</b> WWT Caerlaverock Wetland Centre, Eastpark Farm, Glencaple, DG1 4RS, NY052657
Sunday 11	<b>Caerlaverock NNR Festive Nature Trail - SNH</b> 11.00am – 2.00pm Booking: Not Required	Take a break from the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and have a go at our nature trail. Simply follow the trail on the Nature Reserve and answer the questions as you go. <b>Contact:</b> Reserve staff 01387 770275 <b>Meet:</b> Caerlaverock Castle Corner Car Park NY018652
Sunday 11	<b>RSPB Crook of Baldoon Guided Walk</b> 12.00noon – 2.00pm Booking: Not required	Catch the tide with the warden for an informative walk through the reserve. Learn about the resident wildlife and RSPB's on-going conservation work. Take binoculars and walking boots. <b>Contact:</b> Paul Tarling 01988 402130 <b>Meet:</b> Crook of Baldoon cark park, DG8 9AQ, NX445530
Friday 16	<b>Brownrigg Pond Restoration</b> 10.00am Booking: Not required	Come along and join in with some pond maintenance and weed removal from this traditional village pond in the AONB. Please wear wellies and suitable water proof clothing. Hot drinks might be needed if the weather is cold! <b>Contact:</b> Graeme Proud, the AONB Unit 016973 33055 <b>Meet:</b> Discovery Centre, Sillioth
Sunday 14	<b>Powfoot Past and Present</b> 2.00pm - 4.00pm Booking: Not required	A walk through the grounds of the former Powfoot Lakes with the ranger from Hoddom and Kinmount Estate. <b>Contact:</b> Duncan Ford 07711681505 <b>Meet:</b> Powfoot, in front of old bowling green, NY149658

Don't forget! Saturday 18th February

The Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's 9th North Cumberland Style Hedgelaying Competition.

The competition will both demonstrate and showcase the best of this traditional skill. As well as competing for prizes there is also the opportunity to train for free or just come along and watch the experts.

For more information contact Graeme Proud or Rose Wolfe on 016973 33055



dates for your diary



Cover Photograph by Tom Langlands Photography [www.tomlanglandsphotography.com](http://www.tomlanglandsphotography.com)

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