



Snorkelling Factsheet

UK Snorkelling Sites

NORTH

North Landing, North Yorkshire

Here's a little treat from the northeast: a shore dive in a sheltered, sandy bay with rocky outcrops and plenty of life. North Landing is closed to scuba divers, but we've spoken with the local lifeboat crew and snorkelling there is not a problem.

To get there, drive from Bridlington Head towards Flamborough on the B1255. Keep on this road through Flamborough village towards Thornwick Bay and North Landing - the car park is on the right opposite a shop, and access to the site is via a steep road which leads to the now disused lifeboat station.

Flamborough is a peninsula, stretching 4 miles into the North Sea and bounded by steep chalk cliffs to the north and east. Underwater, you will find a good mixture of kelp, seaweed and fish, though visibility is highly variable.

Paul Tebbutt

Eight Acre Lake, North Cave East Yorkshire

A new inland dive facility.

Burnsall

River dive; site approximately 0.5 mile north of bridge in centre of village. Dive site just below rapids in bend of river, depth approximately 3m, good green meadow adjacent to site. Rapids provide great fun, if care is taken, after dive.

Boggle Hole

Sea dive; site on beach next to Boggle Hole Youth Hostle which is situated at southern end of Robin Hoods Bay, between Robin Hoods Bay village and Ravenscar. Although this is the east coast the site faces North East, so a North or East wind can make this site undiveable, but a great dive in the right conditions.

Farne Islands

Boat Dive; launch from Beadnell Bay just around from harbour, several good snorkels dives are available depending on the sea conditions. The Long Stone is ideal giving good anchorage and shallow water in bay on southern end of island.

Whitby Bay

Boat Dive; launch in Whitby harbour and venture out into the bay, again several sites give good snorkelling. Currents vary depending on state of tide, a 4 knots current can cause problems for the unwary diver.

Beadnell

Shore dive: Dive from shore just north of village, good entry and exits afford the snorkeller a chance to see the abundant sea life of this coast.

NORTH WEST

Debdale reservoir, Gorton, Manchester

Large Pike and Carp to see besides shopping trolleys, abandoned stolen cars, other dumped stolen equipment and golf balls by the bucket-full.



Coniston Water

Lake dive; site on the east shore at the very northern end of Coniston Water, park in car park next to shore. Depth approx 5m in middle of lake, no boats with engines are allowed on the lake and the sailing boats do not come near the northern end.

SOUTH

Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset

Ordnance Survey SY 909 789

This bay has it all. Set in a marine reserve on the Jurassic coast, it has a variety of good dives with an abundance of UK marine life. Kimmeridge is well known to divers as a launching point with access to many wrecks across Purbeck. However, snorkellers know there's no need to go further than the bay itself - Kimmeridge is shallow, ranging up to 7m on the edge of the bay.



In addition to reefs and ledges of black shale, there are lots of interesting species of weed and kelp, which vary the environment and wildlife. There are many fish, especially wrasse, blennies on the ledges. It is fairly sheltered except from the south. The bay is so shallow it sometimes resembles a huge rock pool, making it the ideal venue for snorkellers!

Graham Griffiths

Stair Hole, Lulworth Cove

Ordnance Survey SY 822 798

Stair Hole is a good spot for an experienced snorkel diver wishing to complete a more adventurous dive. Access can be gained by either climbing down the facing cliff - which can be a little challenging with equipment - or in good weather by snorkelling around from Lulworth Cove. It is a famous geological site forming a small lagoon area surrounded by cliffs, with a large hole in the outer cliff leading to open sea. To the left of the hole, there is a small cavern, St Clement's Cave, with a sandy beach at the far end. To the right there is a tunnel through which you can easily snorkel at low water and it leads to the farthest part of the rock formation.

If you have snorkelled around to the site from Lulworth Cove, you can easily swim on the outer wall of the hole, where lobster can be found, as well as dogfish and spider crabs. Average depth is approximately 4m in the lagoon area, descending to 15m a little way out from the hole into open sea. The site is protected from all winds other than southerly and visibility can sometimes be good, but on average is about 3-5m.

Nick Stevens

Swanage, Old and New Pier

Ordnance Survey SZ 036 788

Both piers at Swanage can be rewarding sites for the snorkel diver. Access is obviously very easy - either by using the steps at the side of the pier or by a stride entry from the lower level of the New Pier into deeper water. The piers are protected from most winds, allowing a safe and calm area in which to snorkel, and abound with life, such as spider crabs and wrasse.

Visibility can be up to 10m, with a depth of 7m on a high water, allowing the snorkeller to survey from the surface before choosing a subject to dive down to. Under the New Pier, there are also many unexpected things to find that have either fallen from or been discarded by the strollers- we recently

found a fisherman's deckchair. The Old Pier is very good for spider crabs as well as some colourful anemones and soft corals.

Nick Stevens

Man O'War Cove, Dorset

Ordnance Survey SY 807 802

Next to the great beauty spot of Durdle Dor. Man O'War offers sheltered snorkelling but access is down a long steep path.

Park at the Durdle Dor camp site car park and prepare for a long hike down!

Man O'War is to the East of the Durdle Dor sea arch, so instead of following the tourists take the path to the left at the bottom of the cliff. There is good snorkel diving to be had inside the cove protected from the open sea. At the mouth it gets deeper where you can practice surface dives. More experienced parties can swim round from the Man O'War Cove to and through the Durdle Dor.
Graham Griffiths

Pondfield - Dorset

Ordnance Survey SY 872 796

Near the lost village of Tyneham, this pretty cove is sheltered and offers dramatic scenery and caves to explore. Park in the car park at Tyneham village and follow the path to sea. Pondfield is to the left past the anti-tank block-Worborrow Bay to the right. Pondfield can be a tricky entry over some very slippery rocks, but can be negotiated with care and well worth the effort. It is excellent just diving in the cove visibility is often good due to its sheltered position, with lots of opportunity for surface dives. If the conditions are right and with boat cover, a good dive for the more experienced is from the most easterly part of Worborrow bay around Worborrow Tout into Pondfield and exit from there.
Graham Griffiths

SOUTH WEST

Drawna Rocks, Porthkerris Cove, Cornwall

Porthkerris Cove is popular with divers heading for the Manacles. However just to the north of this cove, you will find Drawna Rocks, a set of rocks breaking the surface which are superb for snorkelling. This is a very visual experience - seaweed grows thick on the rocks in deep greens, reds and even purple. Filtered by the light-green water, sunlight forms picturesque arcs through the water column. The beach at Porthkerris is black and rocky - so you get a clear sea bed and decent visibility. The best snorkelling site is between the beach and the Drawna Rocks. There's lots of opportunity for surface dives here in relatively sheltered water. Fish tend to be found along the rocks, with dogfish on the sea bed.

Graham Griffiths



Prussia Cove, Cornwall

One of the prettiest coves in all of Cornwall, this is actually made up of three coves - Piskies, Bessys and Kings. Prussia Cove can only be reached on foot, the nearest parking is about half a mile away - which keeps it fairly quiet. There is not much beach, especially at high tide, and what there is consists mainly of pebbles.

The steep climb down from the car park will reward you with a beautiful expanse of shallow water. There's lots to see in a rugged and stony area with many gullies to explore. The site is particularly notable for its jellyfish, which sometimes occur in dense masses, saving you a trip halfway around the world to Palau to snorkel in Jellyfish Lake!
Graham Griffiths



Fleet Drift Dive, Weymouth Dorset

Ordnance Survey SY 652 772

We found this dive in the excellent 'Dive Dorset' book (It has a good collection of snorkelling sites as well as SCUBA sites). Take the B3156 from Wyke Regis towards Chickerell. Turn left after the Church, at the end of this road it becomes a track near an old military base and slopes down to the Fleet. If you get the tide right, you can dive along the Fleet towards the Ferry bridge where the Fleet enters Portland harbour. The tide will take you with little effort on your part. The dive is very shallow, but there is lots to see, especially crabs, it goes along a nature reserve area. It's a pleasant walk back along Chesil beach - providing you have dive boots - not recommended for shoe fins - you'll soon buy boots and boots fins if you have to walk barefoot back along the beach!

Graham Griffiths

SOUTH EAST

Wraysbury Dive Centre, Wraysbury, Middlesex

Pity the Londoner, bounded on all sides by that sea of misery known as the M25. There is, however, life just beyond the traffic jams. This inland lake is set up for divers - which means you can always get a decent bacon sandwich - but it has arguably just as much to offer the snorkeller.

Ignore the crowds of tank carriers heading off for the training platforms and the bus: head for the far sides of the lake and you will enjoy a serene insight into the marine life that inhabit fresh water lakes. Water beetles, frogs, freshwater crayfish and some monstrous pike can all be seen lurking among the weed.

In late summer and early autumn, the water warms so much you could even comfortably do it in a 5mm wetsuit. Visibility is variable - if you want clear water, visit in winter and during the week.

Simon Rogerson

WALES

Trearddur Bay, Anglesey

There are some fantastic snorkelling dives around Trearddur Bay. The easiest one to find is the bay opposite the dive shop on Ravenspoint Road. It's a great snorkel around the island, with clear water and plenty of marine life. Quite a number of bays in the area offer good snorkelling, however, some include an overland trek.

Beware of the currents at both the inlets to the bay, especially when the tide is ebbing. It's great fun using the narrower inlet when the tide is flowing, and when you can go on the snorkelling equivalent of a drift dive: it saves a lot of finning when returning to the bay.

A short walk through the caravan site to the right at the top of Ravenspoint Road will bring you onto the foreshore, where more small bays can be discovered - quiet and too shallow for scuba divers, but teeming with marine life. Many happy hours have been had by the young (as well as the young at heart) members of our branch here. It's much easier getting them in than it is getting them out and two two-hour sessions are not unknown - beat that, scuba divers!

Bob Healey

Abercastle, near Mathry (between St Davids and Fishguard), Pembrokeshire

Abercastle - A very narrow bay (deep vee), lots of local fishing boats and many shore lines secured to left-hand side. A 5 minute amble round the coast path however brings you to a small pebble strewn bay which gets you past the mooring lines. Right-hand side of bay is free of mooring lines and has a cut that floods at high water, careful however, RIBs use it as a short cut at high tide. Abercastle has toilets but no shops (post office, Tea Rooms and a Pub in Mathry) and only room for a small number of cars, but a beautiful spot.

Glyn Powell

Martins Haven, Pembrokeshire

Martins Haven at the end of the Marloes peninsula, is also a very good site in west Wales, but watch out for the Skomer shuttle and give the jetty a wide berth. It is exposed to the NW but other than that is snorkellable all the time. There are toilets and an information point. It's a little walk from the carpark down a steep lane. There is a camp site near by.

Glyn Powell & Dr Joanne S Porter

St Brides Haven, Pembrokeshire

Ordnance Survey SM 802 109

St Brides is an excellent location, both to the left and right. It has a sandy central bay area giving way to kelp forest on either side. The site has lots of kelp forest and rocky reef areas. Spider crabs, Dog fish, Wrasse and Pollock are common, but lots of small life as well; light bulb sea squids and blue rayed limpets, well worth a camera + macro.

The sediment is quite coarse so viz is usually good and the rock is red sandstone and is very pretty.

The site is shallow, snorkelling depth up to 7-8m max but usually around 4-6 m.

There are great first snorkel dives close to the beach and more adventurous dives to be found further around to the North.

This site can be dived at any state of the tide and is sheltered. The only time you would find it difficult would be in an onshore wind (north-westerly) as there will be high surf on the beach in those conditions. It is a popular spot for shore divers and dive boat pick up (some launching), so don't forget your SMB. There are a few fishing boats with mooring lines, but if you keep to the edges, no problems, just keep an eye out if crossing from one side to the other.

There are toilets and a telephone, but the car park is shared by the local church, so it can be difficult on a Sunday morning.

Graham Griffiths - With thanks to Dr Joanne S Porter and Glyn Powell

SCOTLAND

The Caves, Loch Long

I remembered from my diving days that there were plumose anemones on several pinnacles here that were quite shallow at around 5-10m, depending on the height of the tides. I promised myself that the next time there was a very low tide I would search them out while snorkelling.

Your choices for entry are either via a tunnel under the bridge, which marks the dive site - or by a path that requires careful steps down a steep, slippery, gravel slope using branches and small tree trunks as handholds. Easy enough for a snorkeller, but quite tricky when you are carrying all your heavy dive gear!

Armed with my SMB and camera, I made my way through the tunnel to the water's edge and donned hood, mask, gloves and fins. I knew that the pinnacles I was looking for were about 50m to the left, so I finned off in that direction, keeping fairly close to the rocky shore where the sea bed was clearly visible. At low tide, the tips of the pinnacles were only about 1m below the surface, so I didn't have to duck-dive very deep in order to take my photographs.

Carol Reid

Conger Alley

On the A83 between Succoth and Artgarten. Argyll.

There are 2 old piers which are best snorkelled at low tide when the legs of the piers are alive with crabs, mussels and starfish and the depth is only about 3m.

Trail Island

Near Millport on Great Cumbrae in the Clyde.

Wrasse a few crabs, evil-looking jellyfish as well as the possibility to see seals while many gulls cormorants watch Snorkellers while sunning themselves on the rocky outcrops.

Dunbar, West Scotland

For those of you that dive around Dunbar Harbour (Castle Rock, Johnson's Hole, Yetts, off the old battery etc), you should note that the old lifting bridge to the north side of the harbour was removed in 2006.

Why not try the old Victorian baths further west around the bay?

There are quite a few steps, but the walk is still considerably shorter and easier than the hill at Petticowick. Furthermore, the old baths fills at high tide (best at springs), located on a sheltered beach, which makes an excellent rescue-training venue, and the shallow (approximately 10m) reefs around the immediate shore have lots of critters and interesting gullies.

Ian Todd

Eyemouth rocks, Berwickshire

This snorkelling site is at Eyemouth rocks south of the harbour. The site can be found by driving down to Aquastars, dive school and then head over the earth bank on the sea ward side. Follow the track south along the sea to where the old pipeline goes into the sea.

This site is best dived at high tide. Enter the water and head inland round a small island. There are lots of deep gullies whose sides are covered in seaweed and sealife.

Dave Crampton