

NEWS RELEASE

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Nine days of events and activities during summer holidays to celebrate Cornwall's seas

- Young people urged to protect Cornwall's seas & shores in National Marine Week
- The Wildlife Trusts' annual National Marine Week is a nationwide celebration of the marine world

Cornwall Wildlife Trust are celebrating National Marine Week this summer by running nine days packed with family-friendly events and activities to celebrate Cornwall's seas.

Running from Saturday 29th July until Sunday 6th August, the events around Cornwall's shoreline aim to help people enjoy Cornwall's marine wildlife and gain an 'up close and personal' experience of the lesser-known creatures and plants found in our seas.

Through [rockpool rambles](#), seagrass snorkels, [cliff-top dolphin watches](#) and more, the wildlife charity hope to inspire a new generation of marine conservationists and volunteers.

Cornwall is home to some of the richest marine wildlife, from tiny rare colourful corals to giant basking sharks. Our marine environment is also under huge pressure from damaging fishing practices, development at sea and pollution from farming, sewage and plastic.

Matt Slater, marine conservation officer at Cornwall Wildlife Trust says:

"Cornwall has a rich and varied coastline with an incredible diversity of marine species that call it their home, our maerl beds and seagrass beds in particular are among the best in the UK and the snorkelling and diving in Cornwall is incredible.

"National Marine week celebrates this diversity; from tiny fluorescent coloured sea slugs to huge fin whales, we have got it all, but it also celebrates the huge value healthy seas offer for us all.

"Our seas provide us with so much, including the very oxygen we all breathe, the seafood we eat, inspiration and recreation, and increasingly they are also being valued as vital in countering climate change, as they are so good at capturing carbon dioxide from our environment.

"They need to be protected better so that future generations can enjoy these many benefits. We want to see at least 30% of our seas under proper protection by 2030 and we will only achieve this with support from the public.

Continues...



“Our seas are an inspiration to many but are still under appreciated, largely because so few of us venture beneath the surface. We hope to inspire and engage with as many people as possible this summer through a host of exciting and inspiring events taking place all around Cornwall! Take the plunge and join in!”

The events have been organised in partnership with Cornwall’s Your Shore Network – a movement of 18 community-led marine conservation groups which Cornwall Wildlife Trust coordinates. This year, young marine conservationists will be featured on the charity’s social media channels throughout the week to shine a light on the diverse wildlife in our seas and projects that are helping to protect nature on our shores. Cornwall Wildlife Trust are also inviting everyone to share their pictures during the week, using the hashtag #nationalmarineweek.

Zeni Hayton, Shoresearch volunteer coordinator at Cornwall Wildlife Trust says:

“I train members of the local marine groups, who are citizen scientists, in the Shoresearch methodology and I help them with their ID skills as well.

“I really love working with different people and showing them the wonders of the rocky shore that they haven’t seen before.

“I think one of my favourite things that I’ve ever found is the solar-powered sea slug. It’s able to process the chloroplasts of the algae that it eats and use them to produce energy for it so it sparkles and glows.”

Some of the lesser-known species found in Cornwall’s seas include:

- Maerl beds – these rare habitats are Cornwall’s own coral reefs! Made of purple nuggets of living algae they are slow growing and exceptionally fragile but are home to an astonishing diversity of marine species. Falmouth harbour and bay are home to some of England’s largest maerl beds.
- Humpback whale – these incredible giants of the sea are becoming increasingly common in Cornish waters in recent years – since the ban on whaling the Atlantic population of humpbacks has increased and they are attracted here by large shoals of sardines and sprats.
- Leatherback turtle – a summer time visitor from warmer seas this, the largest species of turtle in the world, visits our coastal waters when we have large numbers of jellyfish for them to eat! Leatherback turtles can grow to 2 metres long and weigh nearly one ton (900kilos).
- Atlantic bluefin tuna – these huge oceanic predators have only recently started to return to Cornish waters following their prey – sardines and other small fish. Their numbers have recovered following years of overfishing and it is a privilege to see them again in our waters.
- Mediterranean octopus - the largest species of octopus found in UK seas, the Mediterranean octopus grows to well over one metre in arm span and fishermen and divers are reporting far more than usual in our waters in the past two summers.

Continues...



- Sea slugs or nudibranchs - these small molluscs come in all shapes and sizes and there are 195 species in UK waters! Keep your eyes peeled and you may see one when rock-pooling, snorkelling or diving. The most colourful of them all is the rainbow sea slug – Babakina anadoni, which was first seen in Cornish waters last summer, with many sightings this year.

Cornwall boasts the longest coastline in England, stretching over 400 miles long, and is home to globally rare grey seals, iconic choughs and the Southern coast's resident pod of bottlenose dolphins. Wherever you are in Cornwall, you're never more than 16 miles away from the coast.

National Marine Week events include:

Celebrate at the Mounts Bay Seagrass Festival: On 2nd August, join the Your Shore Team and Mounts Bay Marine Group to celebrate all things seagrass at Marazion by St Michael's Mount. Including a seagrass snorkel, rockpool ramble, sand sculptures and more! Discover this unique habitat and how it supports our wonderful Cornish marine life.

Enjoy the Marvellous Manacles Marine Day: 4th August at Porthkerris will be a full day of super fun activities! Start with the shore lab, look at the marine creatures that divers have collected, then join a rockpool safari with the Shoresearch team and end the day with a guided snorkel. There is even the opportunity to try diving and freediving with Porthkerris Divers. Booking is essential!

National Whale and Dolphin Sea Watch: In collaboration with the Sea Watch Foundation's citizen science project, join Seaquest Southwesters at Trevoze Head on 29th July to survey the UK's coastal waters. Help research the distribution of whales, dolphins, and porpoises around the UK.

Come Crabbing in Looe!: On 31st July, marine conservation officer Matt Slater will be with Looe MCG crabbing. Meeting at the Heritage Centre, Matt will explain how to go crabbing respectfully while spotting species on the rocky shore.

Peek Beneath the Waves on a Seagrass Snorkel: Join Cornwall Wildlife Trust on 31st July at Porthpean Beach to delve into the underwater world at one of the largest known seagrass spectacles in the UK. Learn what rare species live in this biodiverse habitat.

A full list of events and volunteering activities is available on Cornwall Wildlife Trust's website. To find out more, visit <https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/national-marine-week>

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Images and videos:

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Images:

- Atlantic bluefin tuna – Henley Speirs
- Babakina adononi – Allen Murray
- Elysia viridis, solar powered sea slug – Matt Slater
- Humpback whale – Gillian Day
- Octopus vulgaris – Sharron Moran
- Solar-powered sea slug – Dan Bolt
- Spider crab on maerl bed – Matt Slater
- Spider crab on maerl – Matt Slater
- Spiny Seahorse – Matt Slater

Editor's notes

About Cornwall Wildlife Trust:

Cornwall Wildlife Trust has been protecting Cornwall's wildlife, on land and at sea, since 1962. It is Cornwall's leading local wildlife conservation charity, with over 17,000 members and 1,000 volunteers. The charity manages 59 nature reserves across Cornwall, including a range of habitats such as woodlands, meadows, wetlands and heaths. It also runs a number of marine and terrestrial based conservation projects in partnership with others, including Upstream Thinking and Penwith Landscape Partnership, and hosts the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS).

The Trust is one of 46 in the UK. Together, they make up the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

Visit www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk and follow [@cwallwildlife](https://twitter.com/cwallwildlife) on Twitter or Cornwall Wildlife Trust on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to keep up-to-date with Trust's projects, events and news.

All National Marine Week events

National Whale and Dolphin Sea Watch

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Beach Cleans



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where nature thrives**

On 30th July, you can head to the north coast of Cornwall and stroll along Hayle Beach with St Ives Marine Group collecting litter and caring for the sandy shore. Suppose you're closer to northeast Cornwall or fancy a change in scenery. In that case, Rame Peninsula Beach Care will be tending to Whitsand Bay.

Chat With Bude Marine Group

During your Sunday stroll along Crooklets Promenade on 30th July, chat with Bude Marine Group and British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR), who are spreading awareness of all the excellent work they do... learn how to get involved in conservation!

Come Crabbing in Looe!

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Peek Beneath the Waves on a Seagrass Snorkel

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Go on a Safari Through the Seagrass

Falmouth Marine Conservation is running a guided tour of our underwater seagrass meadows, learning about the creatures that call it home along the way! Meet at Kiln Quay Beach in Flushing on the 31st of July.

Beachcomb along Polzeath!

Meet at the Polzeath Marine Centre on 1st August and spend the morning combing along the beach, finding all the exciting items washed in by the tide.

Discover the Marine World with St Agnes Marine Conservation Group

A day of rock pooling, arts, beach sculpture and snorkelling at Trevaunance Cove on 1st August. Meet the marine group and see the creative fun our coastline can offer!

Explore Newquay's Marine Life

In an exciting collaboration with Newquay Aquarium, head down to The Harbour Room on 2nd August and get involved in various activities on their marine discovery day.

Celebrate at the Mounts Bay Seagrass Festival

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Rockpool Rambles!

Come and join local experts as they find the amazing critters surviving in all the nooks and crannies on the rocky shore. Learn about starfish, crabs, anemones, and sea slugs with the marine groups around Cornwall.

- 30th July: Join Bude Marine Group at Crooklets Beach between 10am and 1pm to ramble over the rocks.
- 3rd August: On the north coast of Cornwall, you can meet the gang from Polzeath Marine Conservation Group at The Rambles or swing to the south and join Falmouth Marine Conservation Group on the rockpools of Gylly Beach or Helford Marine Conservation Group at the rocky shore of Prisk Cove.
- 4th August: The south coast has all the rockpool ramble action! Meet Looe Marine Group at Hannafore Beach to ramble along their shore, or join the Friends of Fowey Estuary on Readymoney to see what their rockpools hold.

Seaquest Sunday!

The first Sunday of every month brings sea watchers from all over Cornwall to the cliff-tops and lookout points. Seaquest Southwest collaborates with marine and coastal wildlife groups to set up sea-watching sites supported by the local community. From 11am – 1pm on Sunday, 6th August, you can join the following:

- Newquay Marine Group on Towan Headland
- Falmouth Marine Conservation Group on Pendennis Point
- St Ives Bay Marine Group at the St Ives NCI Station
- Three Bays Wildlife Group at Dodman Point
- St Agnes Marine Conservation Group at the St Agnes Head NCI Station
- Perranporth Marine Conservation Group on Cligga Head
- Bude Marine Group at Widemouth Viewpoint

Visit Marine and Coastal Centres Around Cornwall

Over the summer, Cornwall's coasts host many groups and individuals volunteering to support their local environment and teach people about the marine and coastal world. They also strive to educate on good practices and protect people and wildlife so everyone can enjoy nature. Pop in and chat with the local National Coastwatch Institute (NCI) stations, National Trust Watchpoints, and the Marine Centre at Polzeath to see and learn more about our fabulous marine life!



Take action for Cornwall's seas

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No matter where you live in Cornwall, whether on the coast or inland, you can do your bit to help our marine life.

Protecting UK seas

In 2020, the Government committed to protect at least 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (its 30x30 target). According to a 2022 [report](#) by Wildlife & Countryside Link, a maximum of 8% of English waters could be classed as protected from bottom-towed fishing, which damages the seabed. However, other impacts, like offshore developments and other fishing methods, and poor monitoring to assess nature's recovery in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) mean this figure could be lower.

Generation Sea

The Wildlife Trusts have formed a youth steering group called *Generation Sea*. The aim of this group is to provide opportunities for young people to share their views on marine issues, develop skills and gain experience. *Generation Sea* is formed of young people who are passionate about protecting and restoring the marine environment.

The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts are making the world wilder and helping to ensure that nature is part of everyone's lives. We are a grassroots movement of 46 charities with more than 900,000 members and 38,000 volunteers. No matter where you are in Britain, there is a Wildlife Trust inspiring people and saving, protecting and standing up for the natural world. With the support of our members, we care for and restore special places for nature on land and run marine conservation projects and collect vital data on the state of our seas. Every Wildlife Trust works within its local community to inspire people to create a wilder future – from advising thousands of landowners on how to manage their land to benefit wildlife, to connecting hundreds of thousands of school children with nature every year.

www.wildlifetrusts.org



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