

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 touch jellyfish and other wildlife
Never snorkel alone

Emergency Services:

999

Stornoway Coastguard:

01851 702013

Medical Centres:

Gairloch: 01445 712229

Ullapool: 01854 612015

Lochinver: 01571 844755

For further information, visit:

[scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/
snorkeltrail](http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/snorkeltrail)

North West Highlands Snorkel Trail

Wester Ross and Sutherland

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Dive in to Scotland's Living Seas!



Snorkel Trail

North West Highlands



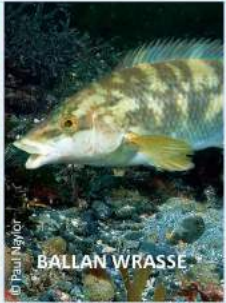
Life under the waves

Scotland's north west coast is home to a rich and diverse array of marine habitats and species. There are no guarantees what you might see on your snorkel trail (that's part of the fun!), but here are some common species to keep an eye out for:

Fish



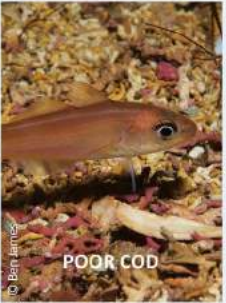
© Graham Saunders
LESSER-SPOTTED DOGFISH



© Paul Naylor
BALLAN WRASSE

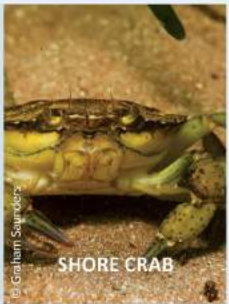


© Ben James
BUTTERFISH



© Ben James
POOR COD

Crustaceans



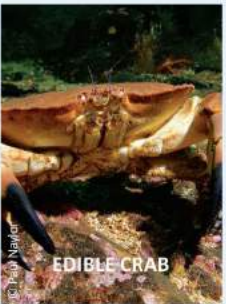
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SHORE CRAB



© Ben James
VELVET SWIMMING CRAB

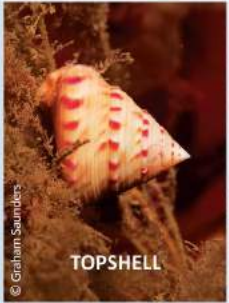


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HERMIT CRAB

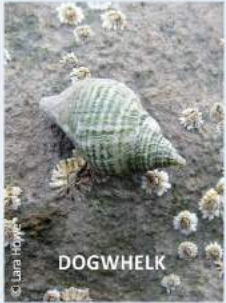


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EDIBLE CRAB

Snails



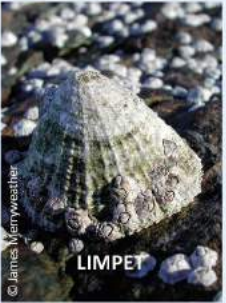
© Graham Saunders
TOPSHELL



© Lara Hovew
DOGWHELK

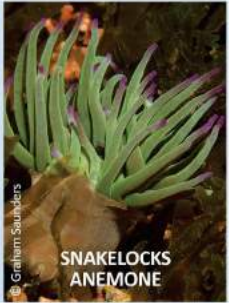


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PERIWINKLE

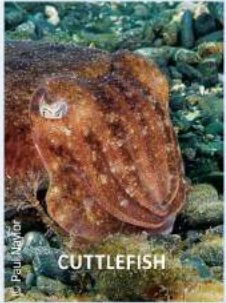


© James Merryweather
LIMPET

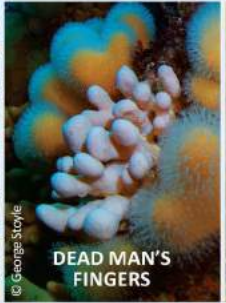
Other Invertebrates



© Graham Saunders
SNAKELOCKS ANEMONE



© Paul Naylor
CUTTLEFISH



© George Stoyke
DEAD MAN'S FINGERS

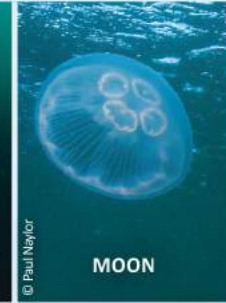


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SEA SQUIRT

Jellyfish



© George Stoyke
LION'S MANE



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MOON

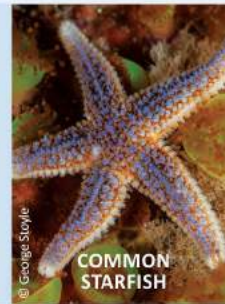


© Noel Hawkins
BARREL



© Graham Saunders
STALKED

Starfish and urchins



© George Stoyke
COMMON STARFISH



© Graham Saunders
BRITTLESTAR



© Malcolm Thompson
SUNSTAR



© Ben James
COMMON URCHIN

Plants and algae



© George Stoyke
KELP



© Lisa Jansphalzen
MAERL



© Ben James
EELGRASS



© James Merryweather
BLADDERWRACK

Also look out for...

HARBOUR PORPOISE

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE

BASKING SHARK

SEALS (COMMON AND GREY)

MINKE WHALE

MERMAID'S PURSE (SHARK OR RAY EGG CASE)

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

What did you see on your snorkel?
Send us your pictures on **Facebook** and **Twitter!**



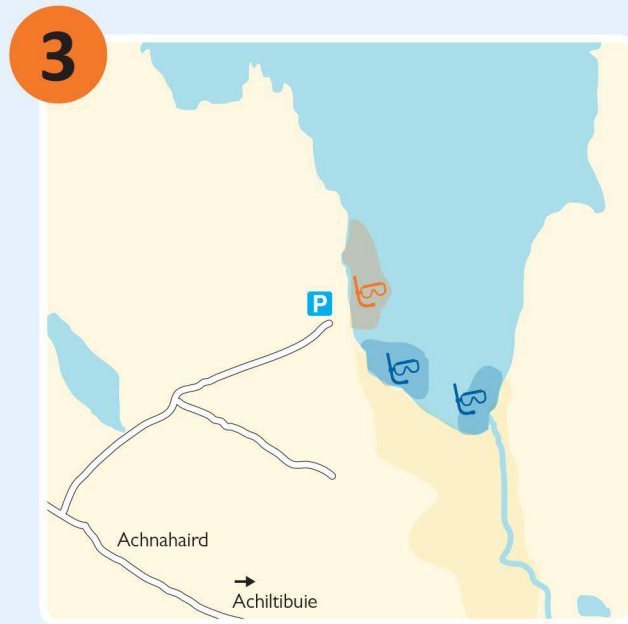
Bay of Clachtoll

- MAP:** OS Landranger 15, NC040270
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Lochinver (6 miles)
- P** A beautiful beach with rocky outcrops and lots of marine life. The headlands provide the bay with some shelter so in calm conditions this can be a good spot for beginners. Watch out for seabirds and marine mammals from the beach and once in the water, look for juvenile fish and shellfish amongst the kelp.



Achmelvich Bay

- MAP:** OS Landranger 15, NC056249
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Lochinver (4 miles)
- P** A stunning sandy beach with rocky outcrops on both sides, providing lots of habitat to explore whilst snorkelling. A perfect beginner location, this site has plenty of fish, shellfish and kelp beds.
- ⚠** The headland to the north leads to another, more secluded beach.



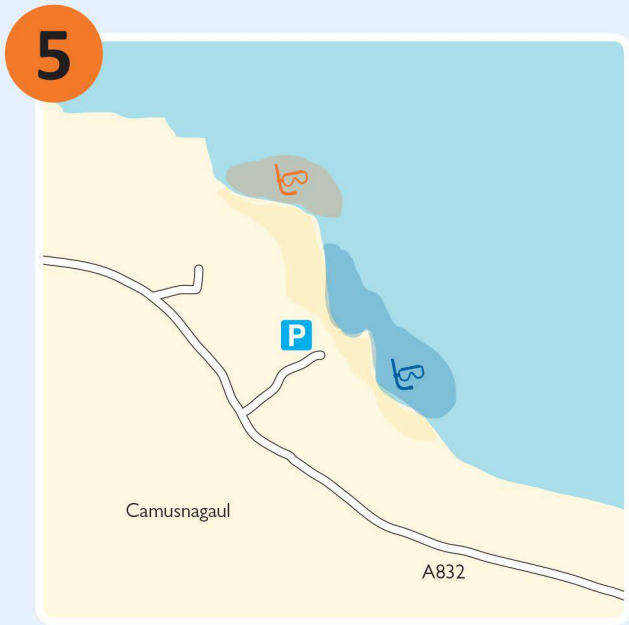
Achnahaird Bay

- MAP:** OS Landranger 15, NC019139
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Achiltibuie (4 miles)
- P** A largely sheltered bay which is flanked by rocky outcrops. Underwater, kelp beds provide cover for juvenile fish such as pollock and coley. Be aware of tides as the gently sloping beach means that it recedes a long way which can lead to big walks in and/or back.



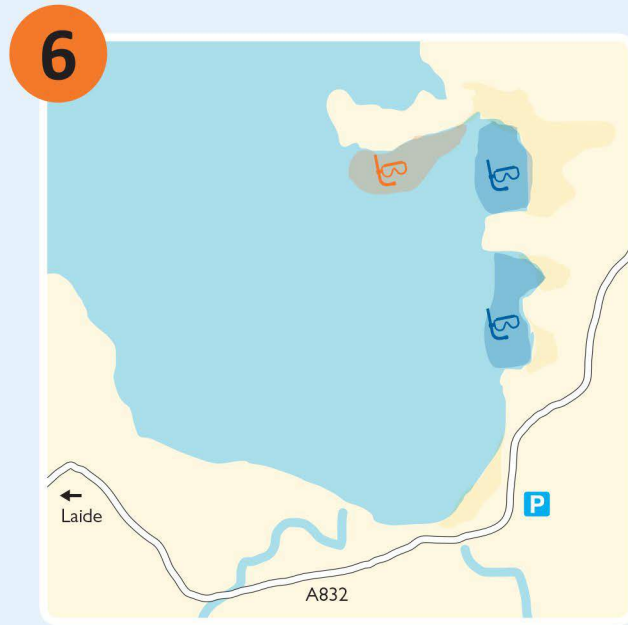
Ardmair

- MAP:** OS Landranger 19, NH108982
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Ullapool (3.5 miles)
- P** With views across to Isle Martin, this rocky beach offers something for everyone. The northern kelp-covered headland provides shelter for juvenile fish, while the south is a good place to find crabs and urchins. A shallow gradient makes the area directly out from the beach good for beginners. Keep an eye out for seals, seabirds and porpoise in the bay.



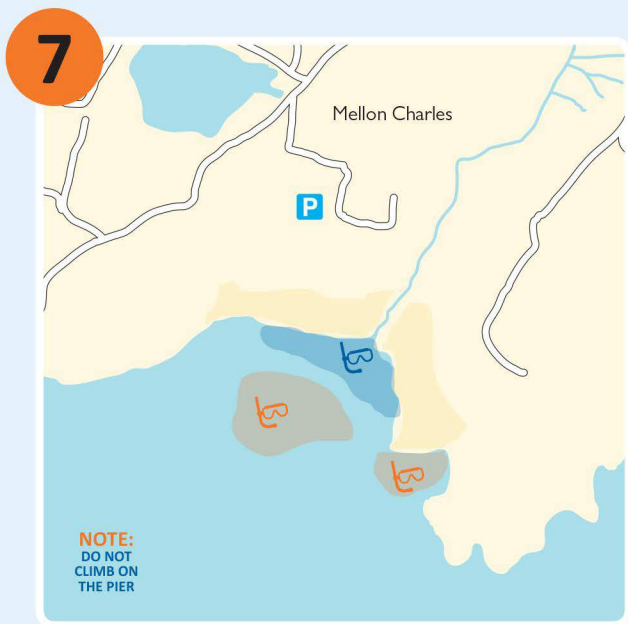
Camusnagaul

- MAP:** OS Landranger 19, NH067892
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Camusnagaul (0 miles)
- P** A cleared shore leads out to a sandy bottomed area with rocky coastline to the west. Kelp and numerous rock pools provide perfect habitat for juvenile fish and crabs. Access is from the croft field via a gate to the beach. Please watch for livestock in the field and boats using the beach.



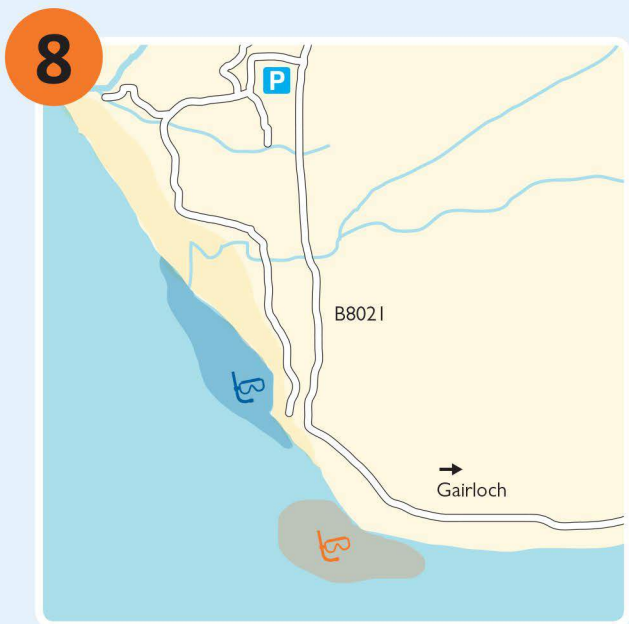
Gruinard Bay

- MAP:** OS Landranger 19, NG950905
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Laide (4 miles)
- P** The headland at the north end of this picturesque beach offers great low tide exploration. Where the sand turns to rocky shore, seagrass and kelp provide shelter for numerous fish, shellfish and other marine life. Rare and fragile maerl can also be seen here. Be aware that the small northern headland becomes cut off at high tide.



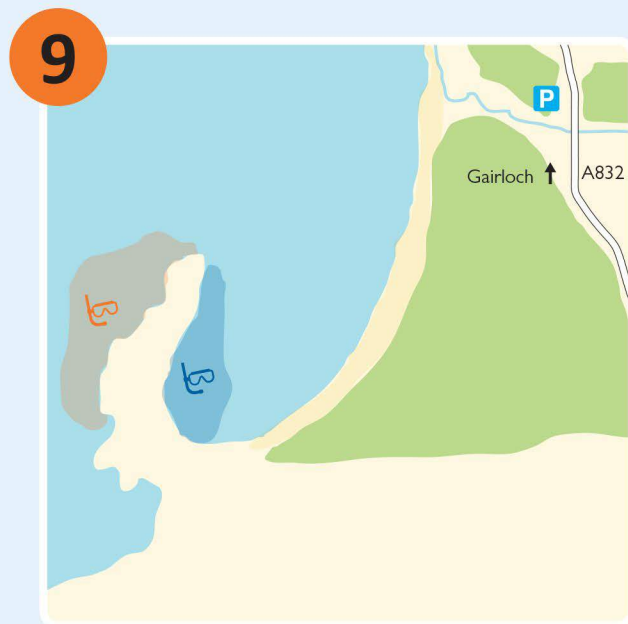
Mellon Charles

- MAP:** OS Landranger 19, NG845910
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Mellon Charles (0 miles)
- P** A sheltered beach once owned and used by the Ministry of Defence. The old WW2 pier is a fantastic place to explore - urchins, anemones and wrasse can be seen beneath the waves and in the summer, look out for arctic terns. Kelp along the rocky shoreline also provides habitat for juvenile fish.



Big Sand Carn Dearg

- MAP:** OS Landranger 19, NG760777
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Gairloch (3 miles)
- P** The headland south of Big Sand has a nice sandy beach and is a great area for beginners. Further offshore, a reef with kelp forests, colourful rock dwellers and lots of fish is excellent for the more advanced snorkeller (100m swim required at low tide). Best explored when seas are calm.



An Dun

- MAP:** OS Landranger 19, NG80375
- NEAREST VILLAGE:** Gairloch (1 mile)
- P** The An Dun headland offers a sheltered lagoon at low tide where juvenile fish and other small marine creatures congregate. The advanced trail on the outer side of the headland offers kelp forests, fish and shellfish (requires scramble over slippery boulders). The headland can be reached via a path from the Gairloch Golf Course car park.

Key

- C** Camping
- P** Parking
- T** Toilets
- S** Shop
- ⚠** Single Track Access
- C** Café

- B** Beginner
- A** Advanced