

# EDUCATION PACK

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## **Orca Sea Safaris - An introduction**

Running from the historic port of Falmouth, Orca Sea Safaris run boat trips with 'Seaquest of Falmouth' our 12 seat Rigid inflatable boat, with trips departing from the National Maritime Museum Cornwall all year round.

Our School group trips aim to introduce children to the outstanding beauty of our coastline, while creating a learning experience that they will enjoy and remember. We are happy to take groups of children aged 6 - 16

All trips are accompanied by a full educational commentary, which may include all or part of the following depending on the Key Stage and the area of the school curriculum being studied.

- Wildlife and Natural History
- Marine Environment
- History
- Geology and Geography
- Conservation and protection of the marine environment

We can tailor the experience to suit so this will need to be discussed at the time of booking. Various educational resources can also be provided while on board such as spotters guides or species recording sheets.

Each trip includes free entry to the National Maritime Museum on the day of your trips and other possible combination packages are covered later in this guide

### **What length of trip?**

We recommend 2 hours on the boat to explore the area fully, though we are happy to tailor the length of the boat trip depending on your preference, ranging from 1 hour to 3 hours.

### **What area do we cover?**

Our Sea Safaris cover the South Cornish coastline from Dodman Point (East of Falmouth) to The Lizard Peninsular (West of Falmouth)

A 2 hour boat trip has the ability to cover up to 26 miles of sea, though if there is a particular area that is preferred, we will do our up-most to cover that area during your trip.

Your skipper will need to take into account weather, wind and tides and safety is paramount at all times so there may be occasions where we are unable to cover a particular area.

## What may be seen on our trips

### Wildlife

Cornwall's coastline is rich and diverse in marine wildlife

Cornwall is special in that the Gulf Stream brings warm waters flowing from the South, which then mix with cooler Northern waters. This has the effect that Cornwall supports many species, both on land and sea, which are at the edge of their climatic ranges, making Cornwall's waters amongst some of the richest marine habitats in the world.

Underwater topography( reefs and drop-offs) and sometimes stormy conditions allow good up-welling and mixing of the water layers, bringing nutrients to the surface. This in turn supports a rich web of species and attracts an abundance of marine wildlife.

### Cetaceans - Dolphins, Whales and Porpoise

Bottlenose dolphins can sometimes be spotted close to shore in small pods of 3 - 10 throughout the year. The smaller Common Dolphins stay further offshore and may be spotted in much larger pods - sometimes up to 100+. These dolphins tend to be very playful, bow riding and performing some amazing acrobatics. Another dolphin species that we may see is the large Risso dolphin, though these are spotted less often. The shy Harbour Porpoise, although fairly difficult to spot due to its small fin, is quite common around our shores.

Whales are a lot rarer, though not impossible to see. The Minke Whale is the species most likely to be seen, though huge Fin Whales are known to migrate through our waters at certain times of the year.



### Sharks

At least 21 species of Sharks can be found in British waters with Blue, Shortfin Mako, Thresher and Porbeagle being among species either resident or seasonal to Cornish Shores. However, it is for the Basking Shark, the second largest fish in the world that Cornwall is famous.

Growing up to 10 metres long and congregating over the summer months when water and plankton temperatures are favourable, they can be seen, often quite close to shore, filter feeding on the surface.

To see one of these giants swim towards the boat is an unforgettable experience...



## Seals

We can see resident Atlantic Grey Seals on a large number of our sea safaris either basking on rocks or swimming in the sea close to shore.

Sometimes they seem to be as curious of us as we are of them!

Soft Slate rocks around part of our coastline mean that the sea can erode large caves, which are ideal for the seals to shelter in and also to give birth.

Around approximately august/september we occasionally see their small white-coated pups on the quieter beaches and once the pups have left their mother we can see larger groups hauled out on the beaches to breed..



## Birds

We are lucky to have a rich variety of habitats on our doorstep, attracting many different species of birds, both as residents and migrants passing through.

Rugged cliffs, muddy creeks, salt-marsh, sandy and rocky shores, sheltered coves and freshwater means a wide range of species can be seen on our trips.

Our rivers and estuaries provide the perfect conditions for wading birds, divers, grebes, wildfowl, kingfishers and Birds of Prey, while our coastal shores and further out to sea bring delights such as Diving Gannets, Puffins, Terns, Petrels, shearwaters, Cormorants and many many more...



## Other wildlife

At different times of the year we can find other species of wildlife on our sea safaris such as the strange looking Sunfish, a disc shaped fish that can grow up to 2 metres in diameter and can sometimes be seen floating flat on the sea surface.

Jellyfish are quite often seen in the summer months and sometimes the sea can be littered with Cuttlefish bones during their spawning season.

We never quite know what we might find as sea temperatures change more and more unusual species are being found around our Cornish Shores



## Rivers and Estuaries

Explore the Carrick Roads and venture further down into the River Fal. See the historic King Harry Ferry, which has been taking cars backwards and forwards across the river since 1888. Take a trip down the Helford River, home of Daphne Du Mauriers 'Frenchman's Creek'. There is a large learning potential here as both the Fal and Helford Rivers are classed as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Areas of Conservation and Areas of Special Scientific Interest.



## Geology, Rocks and Headlands

Our Coastline has a fascinating and unusual Geology such as the serpentine cliffs of the Lizard Peninsular. Get up close to Gull rock, a huge triangular Rock, which is home to **hundreds of nesting seabirds** in spring.



## Towns and Villages

Introduce children to **Cornish towns and villages** from a completely different perspective. Every village that we see has a host of fascinating tales to tell, from history and smuggling to fishing and to what life was like in the past.



Towns and villages that are situated along our area of coastline are - Falmouth, St Mawes, Portscatho, Portloe, Helford, Helford Passage, Porthallow, Porthoustock, St Keverne, Coverack and Cadgwith

## Shipwrecks and Rescues

We visit notorious areas of rugged Coastline such as the infamous Manacles reef, **home to over 100 shipwrecks** and hear about some of the individual stories. There are also more recent wrecks such as the Ben Asdale, which can still be seen above the waterline.

Listen to tales of daring rescues by locals and lifeboats - fantastic to fire the imagination!



## Smuggling, Legends and Literature

Hear some of the tales of smuggling in days gone by. Discover local legends such as the **Cornish Sea monster 'Mawgar'**, and visit places that have been brought to life in literature such as Daphne Du Mauriers '**Frenchmans Creek**'.



## Fishing

Learn about some of the fishing methods used in days gone by as well as see some of our small villages that still have a small active fishing fleet. You may even see some of them in action.



## Castles and Lighthouses

See the twin Castles of St Mawes and Pendennis, built in the reign of **Henry VIII** and hear about their role in the **English Civil war**. Get up close to St Anthony's Lighthouse



## **Marine Environment**

We are able to discuss various aspects of Marine Science such as...

- Tides
- Underwater Currents
- Underwater Topography
- Nutrients
- Food Webs

## **Conservation and protection**

The Marine environment is a fragile environment that has been covered a lot in the news recently

Some of the areas of interest that we can discuss are...

- Marine Protected Areas
- Over-fishing and depletion of fish stocks
- Global Warming
- Acidification of the seas
- Marine litter and plastics
- Coastal erosion and sea level rises
- By-catch
- Loss of Biodiversity

## **Our own Ethos**

We are WiSe accredited, which means that we have undergone training on how to operate around wildlife in the most sensitive and unobtrusive way possible. In general, we aim to gather as much data as possible regarding our wildlife sightings that we pass on to organisations such as Cornwall Wildlife Trust of whom we are Corporate members. This data can then be used for scientific research to explore marine conditions and the patterns of marine life within these conditions

## **Suggested activities while on the trip**

Spotters guides (young children)

Recording wildlife sightings (Record sheets suitable for different ages with varying amounts of detail)

Photography

Bird population counts

## **Suggested further projects once back in school**

History projects

Imagination stories - shipwrecks or what life was like in the past in Cornwall

Conservation projects

## **Suggested packages for larger groups**

Our boat can carry 12 passengers on each trip. We realise that school groups are usually larger than this and by combining one or two additional activities during the day, your group can be split up so that each group is enjoying a different activity at the same time, swapping so everyone takes part in a boat trip.

For groups of up to 24 there is no additional cost to do this, as free entry to the National Maritime Museum is already included. This means that 12 people can enjoy a boat trip while 12 visit the museum and then swap afterwards.

We have other activities that can be combined for groups of 12 to 36 which are listed below.

### **Combined Beach education / Sea Safari boat trip package**

Activities and learning along the shore with Marine scientist Dr Joanna Henley of Sciart solutions, and then an educational boat trip with Orca sea safaris  
The shore packages is made up of activities from the following and can be tailored to suit the key stage and curriculum area of the group ...

- 'Life between the tides'
- Seaweed ecology and identification activities ,
- learning about the local coastline and it's inhabitants,
- creating marine-themed artworks,
- rockpool ramble,
- sampling
- weaving 3D food webs on the shore.

Beach activities will take place at Castle Beach Falmouth at Low tide.  
The second part of the package consists of a boat trip onboard 'Seaquest of Falmouth'

### **Beach Education / Sea Safari / Maritime Museum Package**

As above but incorporating a trip around the Maritime Museum at no extra cost

### **Sea Safari / Maritime Museum Activities Package**

The National Maritime Museum Cornwall has a fantastic education department with activities and events to suit all ages. General museum entry is free with your sea safari but for an extra cost you can incorporate a fun and educational group activity with your visit.

## Practicalities

### **Booking**

Pre-booking is essential, when all your needs can be discussed and a suitable package can be created to suit the age of your group and the subject matter being studied.

### **Contact Details**

Louise Green

Orca Sea Safaris

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### **Address :**

Office: 2 Ferry Cottages, Feock, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 6QJ

Trip Venue: Orca Sea Safaris, Events Square, Discovery Quay, Falmouth, TR11 3QY

### **Price**

The cost of the booking will vary according to the length and content of your package. Prices start from £10 p.p but please contact us for specific prices.

### **Payment**

We are happy to invoice your school for payment

### **Equipment provided**

We provide full safety equipment for all passengers including lifejackets (both child and adult size), which must be worn at all times. We suggest that all passengers dress suitably with flat, preferably non-slip shoes (trainers, walking boots or wellies are great), warm clothing (it is always colder on the water than on land) and suitable waterproofs.

We have a selection of binoculars on board and provide goggles to keep wind or spray from the eyes.

For certain packages we also provide extra educational material such as spotters guides or species recording sheets- please discuss when booking.

## Find Us

Our office is situated on Events Square right in front of the National Maritime Museum Cornwall.

There is a Coach drop off and pick up point but no coach parking.

Alternatively for an extra cost, park at Ponsharden Park and Float and take a boat trip to Falmouth Custom House Quay, where Events Square is only a short walk away.



## Safety

Our boat is fully licensed, insured and coded by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to carry 12 passengers, 20 miles from any safe haven. Full electronics and safety equipment is carried and skippers are highly experienced and fully endorsed by the Maritime and Coastguard agency.

Please view our separate Risk assessment online or phone to request a copy on 01872 861910.

## Cancellation

It is very rare that we will have to cancel a trip due to bad weather as we have many sheltered areas to go. However, if the skipper deems the weather too bad to sail, or we experience circumstances beyond our control, we can either reschedule your trip to another day or offer you a full refund.

We will accept cancellation from you up to one month before your trip. If the booking is cancelled between 2-4 weeks before your trip you will receive a 50% refund and for cancellation with less than 2 weeks notice, full payment will be retained by us.