



Living Seas

Join us on an incredible undersea journey



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future



The Wildlife Trusts

There are 47 Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK. Together, we are the UK's largest voluntary organisation dedicated to protecting wildlife and wild places whether in the country, in cities or at sea. We are supported by nearly 800,000 members, 150,000 of which belong to our junior branch, Wildlife Watch.

Building on more than 30 years of experience, The Wildlife Trusts are leading the way in marine conservation. Our Marine Bill Campaign played a pivotal role in convincing the UK government to pass new laws to protect our seas. Right across the UK, we are inspiring people about marine wildlife and carrying out vital research to help protect basking sharks, dolphins, seals, corals and a host of rare and fragile habitats.

www.wildlifetrusts.org

Did you know?

Many extraordinary landscapes are hidden beneath the UK's seas. Names like the Lune Deep, Saturn Reef and Dogger Bank could one day be as familiar to us as the Brecon Beacons and the Norfolk Broads.

Cover image: Ballan wrasse, Jim Greenfield, www.oceaneyephoto.com.

This page: Kelp forest, Luke Atkinson.

Living Seas

The Wildlife Trusts' vision

Living Seas. What picture does this phrase conjure up in your mind? A rocky reef bursting with brightly coloured fish, corals and sponges? A boat trip in the company of leaping dolphins and playful seals? Fishermen hauling nets brimming with big, tasty fish? Living Seas are all these things and more.

We urgently need your help to bring back the UK's Living Seas. Thanks to new laws, we now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help our seas recover their health.

Please join us on our journey towards Living Seas. Read on to find out how you can be involved.

Did you know?

The fried egg sea anemone, prawn cracker sponge, baked bean sea squirt and hot cross bun jellyfish are just a few of the many thousands of different animals and plants found in UK seas.

Reef scene, Dave Peake.



What is **Living Seas**?

Living Seas is The Wildlife Trusts' vision for the future of the UK's seas. Within Living Seas, marine wildlife thrives, from the depths of the ocean to the coastal shallows. In Living Seas:

- Wildlife and habitats are recovering from past decline as our use of the seas' resources becomes environmentally sustainable.
- The natural environment is adapting well to a changing climate, and ocean processes are helping to slow down climate change.
- People are inspired by marine wildlife and value the sea for the many ways in which it supports our quality of life.

We believe it is possible to achieve Living Seas around the UK within 20 years – a single generation – but only if opportunities are seized right now.

Did you know?

Sea anemones – though they look like harmless flowers – are deadly predators. The spectacular fireworks anemone, which lives in Scottish sea lochs, can grow up to 30cm high and lives in a metre-long tube buried in the mud.

Fireworks anemone and squat lobster, Charles Erb.



Our **life support** system

The seas around the UK have the potential to be among the most productive and wildlife-rich on Earth. Colourful reefs, meadows of seagrass and other extraordinary habitats are home to many thousands of plants and animals, from tiny corals to the massive basking shark, the world's second largest fish.

The UK's seas are also our life support system. They absorb vast quantities of harmful 'greenhouse' gases, while releasing oxygen for us to breathe. The seas provide us with many everyday resources too, from seafood to energy. And our coastal waters are an unrivalled playground, enjoyed for sport and relaxation.

Did you know?

The hermit crab is a property expert. Living in an abandoned snail shell, it curls its spiral-shaped body into the shell to hold it on. As it grows it must regularly move home, and competition over the most desirable residences often leads to a fight.

Hermit crab on starfish, Jim Greenfield, www.oceaneyephoto.com.





Our seas **in trouble**

Right now, the seas around the UK are not Living Seas. For centuries we have taken the seas' riches for granted, taking too much with too little care.

Basking shark numbers have fallen by more than 95%. The common skate, once abundant, is on the brink of extinction. Corals, seahorses, whales, dolphins and seals – all are at risk.

Thankfully, it is not too late to turn this situation around. Our seas and sea life have a remarkable capacity to recover – but only if we give them the chance. If we act now, Living Seas are within our grasp.

Did you know?

Seahorses are thought to mate for life and, famously, it is the males that get pregnant. Shortly after dawn each day, seahorse couples perform a special dance for each other, believed to strengthen the bond between them.

Short-snouted seahorse, Paul Naylor, www.marinephoto.co.uk.

Why must we **act now?**

Following a ten year campaign by The Wildlife Trusts and partners, two new Acts of Parliament were passed in 2009-2010 that could dramatically boost protection for marine wildlife. But new laws are only the beginning. The real challenge is to make it happen – to achieve real change – and that is where The Wildlife Trusts come in.

If we act now, we can restore giants such as the common skate and basking shark to abundance. We can ensure a future for corals, seahorses and seagrass meadows. We can rebuild Living Seas. Our generation could go down in history as the one that set our seas on the road to recovery.

Did you know?

The tompot blenny, with its clown-like face, is a firm favourite with scuba-divers. It's a feisty little fish, picking prey that no other predators will touch – crunching through barnacles' shells and battling with stinging anemones.

Tompot blenny, Gareth Millson, www.scorpionfish.co.uk.





Why The Wildlife Trusts?

The Wildlife Trusts are natural champions of Living Seas. We are independent of governments, which allows us to set out a long-term vision that goes way beyond short-term political goals.

What really sets us apart is our ‘localness’. Everywhere you go in the UK, there is a Wildlife Trust representing local people and standing up for local wildlife. Our many marine projects and surveys – and our intimate knowledge of our 150 coastal nature reserves – give us an unrivalled insight into the needs of marine wildlife. This wealth of experience means that our united voice, across the UK, is respected and trusted by decision makers.

From the seashore to the halls of power, The Wildlife Trusts are making a difference.

Did you know?

The male corkwing wrasse is a typical modern dad. He decorates the nursery – carefully lining a rocky nook with seaweed – and, when the mum has laid her eggs there, he guards them until they hatch.

Corkwing wrasse, Sally Sharrock.

What needs **to be done?**

Our work to restore Living Seas focuses on four themes:

Marine Protected Areas and wildlife. We're making sure that wildlife is properly protected, from the coast to the deep blue sea beyond.

Fishing and seafood. We're working to change the UK's fishing industry for the better, reducing its impacts and bringing it in harmony with Living Seas.

Marine planning and sustainable development. Our goal is to make sure that marine industry avoids damage and makes a positive contribution to Living Seas.

Legislation and policy. We're continually pushing for improvements to the laws and policies that set out how our seas are managed.

Did you know?

With their dazzling colours, sea slugs put their land-living relatives in the shade. But their vivid markings are strictly to scare off predators. The slugs' eyes can only detect light and dark, meaning they can never see each other in all their glory.

Elegant sea slug, Paul Naylor, www.marinephoto.co.uk.





Marine Protected Areas and wildlife

Under the new Acts of Parliament, the UK has committed itself to creating a network of Marine Protected Areas by 2012. Marine Protected Areas are places where human activities are restricted to varying degrees. They are a proven way of safeguarding important habitats and wildlife, allowing nature to recover and thrive.

Across the UK, we are working to make the most of this unique opportunity. Along the east coast of England, for example, twelve Wildlife Trusts are working together to make sure that the North Sea has the protection it needs. Meanwhile in the seas around Anglesey, the North Wales Wildlife Trust is studying dolphins and porpoises. By learning more about their behaviour and movements, the Trust can push for effective protection.

Did you know?

When threatened, the phosphorescent sea pen coral produces flashes of light that pass like a Mexican Wave over its body. In case this fails, the sea pen also contains a toxic cocktail of narcotic and appetite-suppressing drugs – quite a mouthful!

Phosphorescent sea pen, Paul Naylor, www.marinephoto.co.uk.

Fishing and seafood

The new laws also include measures to improve the sustainability of fishing – which could play a huge role in restoring Living Seas. Our role is to make sure that this opportunity is seized.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust, for example, is working with local fishermen to test new gadgets designed to prevent dolphins from getting tangled in fishing nets. The Wild Oceans project, run by Cumbria Wildlife Trust with the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, is building partnerships with local fishermen, fishmongers, cookery schools, restaurants and fish and chip shops to raise awareness of sustainable seafood options.

Did you know?

No one knows how the John Dory got its name. Is it from the French 'jaune dorée' meaning 'golden yellow'? Is it named after the hero of an ancient ballad? Or is it from 'Janitore', a nickname for St Peter, who took a coin from the fish's mouth to pay his taxes?

John Dory, David Stephens.





Marine planning and sustainable development

The new laws bring in a brand new planning system for the sea, as well as better controls on industry at sea. But only if these powers are used in a responsible way will they bring about a return to Living Seas.

Dorset Wildlife Trust has mapped 300 square miles of the county's seabed. The detailed maps will help influence the new planning system, as well as helping decide which places should become Marine Protected Areas. Right around the UK, Wildlife Trusts are working with developers, including the rapidly-growing offshore windfarm industry, to make sure that development is wildlife-friendly.

Did you know?

Painted gobies are the songbirds of the fish world. Male gobies make drumming and thumping sounds to woo a mate and defend their territory. Different males thump out different rhythms, and bigger males thump more vigorously than their smaller rivals.

Painted goby, Cathy Lewis.

Legislation and policy

To achieve Living Seas, it is critical that we continue to push for improvements in the legislation and policies that influence our seas. A good example is in Northern Irish seas, which are not fully covered by the new Acts of Parliament. The Ulster Wildlife Trust is campaigning for extra legislation to plug that gap. Meanwhile, the Scottish Wildlife Trust is helping shape laws and policies to protect Scotland's marine life. And in Westminster, The Wildlife Trusts' Living Seas team is working at a ministerial level to influence vital decisions about the future of the UK's seas and marine wildlife.

Did you know?

More than a metre long, with bulging eyes and crooked fangs, the wolf fish is no oil painting. Crunching its way through sea urchins, crabs and large sea snails, it grows a new set of teeth behind the worn ones.

Wolf fish, Jim Greenfield, www.oceaneyephoto.com.





Join us on our journey towards Living Seas

This is a monumental time. We have the next five years to set the UK's seas on the road to recovery. If we succeed, we will have achieved something our children and grandchildren will thank us for – Living Seas for all to enjoy.

We would like you to join us on the journey – to be a part of this historic moment. Your support today could make all the difference.

- **Join your Wildlife Trust.** Become a member of your Wildlife Trust and support conservation on land and at sea in your local area.
- **Volunteer.** Contact your local Wildlife Trust to find out how you can get involved in Living Seas projects, surveys and other activities.
- **Make a gift.** Please contact us to discuss how you can support vital conservation projects around the UK.
- **Add your voice.** Join the SOS team, our online campaigners' network, to find out how you can support and take part in our Living Seas campaigns.
- **Share our vision.** Tell your friends, family and colleagues about Living Seas, and ask them to help us too.
- **Find out more.** Visit www.wildlifetrusts.org.

Child exploring the seashore, Richard Cobden, Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Did you know?

Humans have a single heart, the Doctor in Doctor Who has two, and an octopus has three! Octopuses are highly intelligent, great at problem-solving, and expert escape-artists – they can squeeze their soft body through a hole not much bigger than their eye.



Lesser octopus, Jim Greenfield, www.oceaneyephoto.com.

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Jewel anemones, Sally Sharrock.

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