



Sea Angling along the Dumfries and Galloway Coast



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Introduction to the Dumfries and Galloway Coast

This booklet covers the coast of Dumfries and Galloway from the mouth of Loch Ryan to the Inner Solway. The area is one of the least developed and most natural coastlines in the British Isles. The area's spectacular coastal scenery is one of contrasts, with immense areas of intertidal sand flats, rugged cliffs and offshore islands. Along the coastline rocky bays alternate with estuarine saltmarsh, while steep mountains rise from the coastal plain. The Galloway Hills to the north, the Lake District to the south and the Isle of Man to the south west, provide the perfect backdrop to sunrise and sunset.

The Dumfries and Galloway coast is also rich in marine life with over 130 species of fish being recorded in the area. Such diversity of catch combined with some of the finest tope, ray and inshore pollock fishing make the area a must for any sea angler. The importance of this wildlife is reflected in the area's many conservation designations, which include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). (Contact Scottish Natural Heritage for details - www.snh.org.uk)

This booklet is intended to help you get the most out of sea angling along the Dumfries and Galloway coast, without compromising its wildlife, scenic value and other users of the coast.



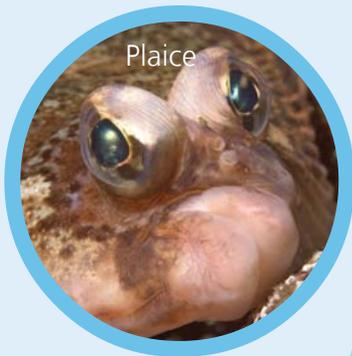
Common Solway Fish

The Dumfries and Galloway coast supports a fantastic variety of fish and holds many of the British and Scottish angling records. Here is some information on some of the most commonly caught.

Cod - are found all around the coast of Britain from the shoreline down to depths of 600m. They can grow to 120cm in length, weighing around 12 kg, however larger fish have been recorded.



Bass - tend to occur inshore on rocky reefs usually down to a depth of about 10m. Bass are warm water species and migrate north in the summer months. They can reach 1m in length, although 60cm is more usual.



Flatfish - The Inner Solway is a nursery area for plaice, flounder, sole and dab. All of which are common throughout Dumfries and Galloway. In addition turbot and brill are occasionally caught.

Pollock and coalfish (saithe) - are similar in shape and colour and are found from the shore down to 25m depth. Both species can grow to over 1m, but an average size is around 50cm for pollock and 70-80cm for coalfish.



Wrasse - Both the ballan (see cover photo) and cuckoo wrasse can be found on rocky coasts between 5 and 50m in depth. The male cuckoo wrasse is one of the most colourful British fish. Ballan tend to be larger (up to 50cm), however 30cm is more usual for both species.



Cuckoo Wrasse



Dogfish

Dogfish - Both the lesser spotted (rough hound) and greater spotted (bull huss) dogfish are found in the Solway. Bull huss are the larger of the species (up to 160cm) compared to rough hounds which tend to reach 70cm.

Tope - These small, common fast swimming sharks (see cover photo) can grow up to two metres. They hunt in shallow inshore waters all around Britain. They are frequently caught in Luce Bay and off the Galloway coast.

Other fish - Mackerel, haddock, gurnards (tub, grey and red), rays (thornback, spotted and blonde), conger eels, eels, garfish and smooth hounds are also species caught off the Dumfries and Galloway coast.

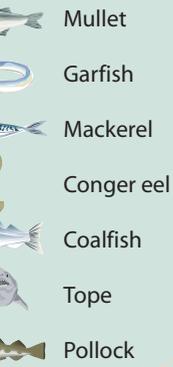


Conger Eel

Sea angling in the Outer Solway Firth



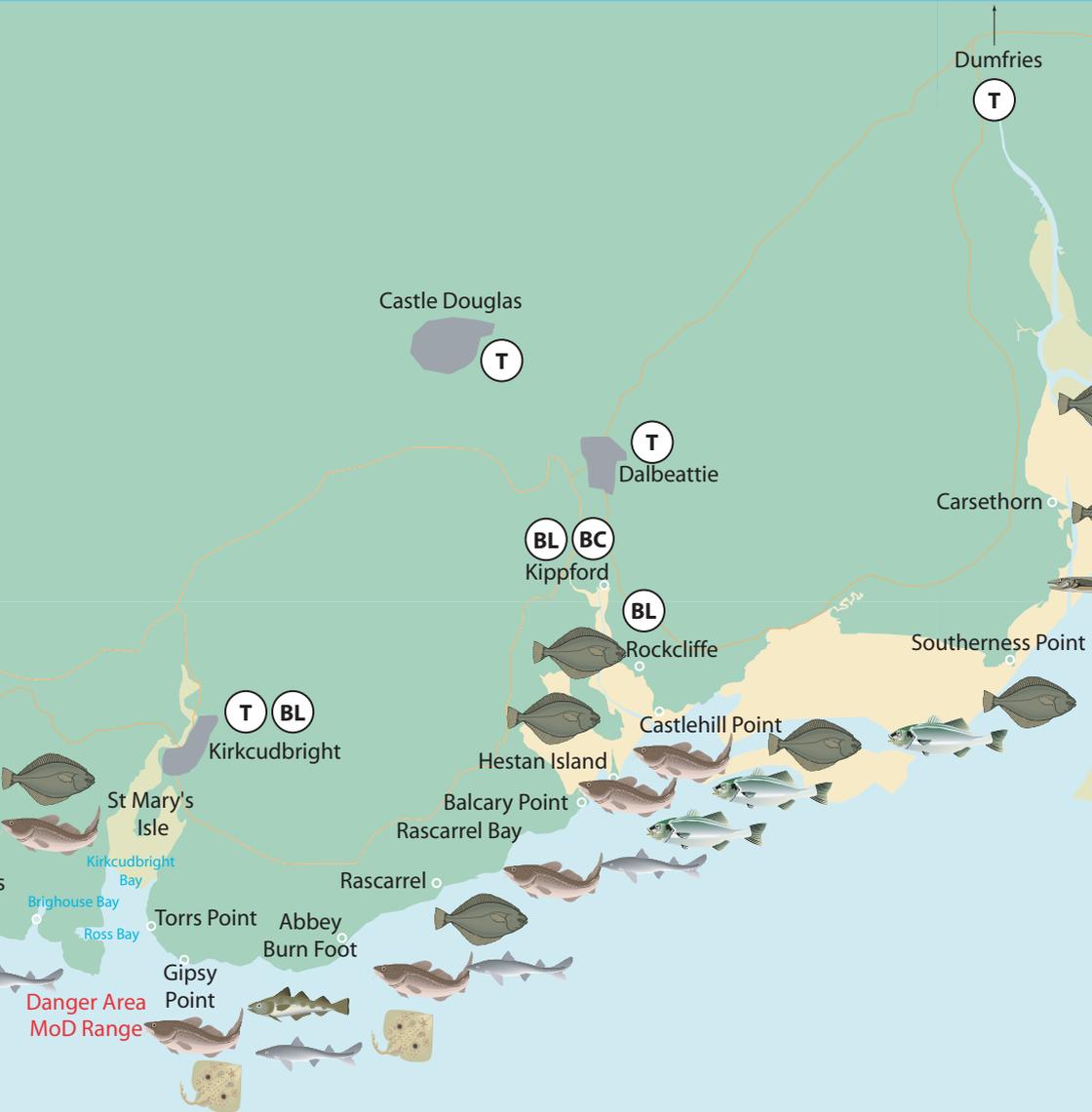
Note: this map is for illustrative purposes only



- (T)** Tackle shop
- (BL)** Boat launch area
- (BC)** Boat charter
- Good spots for angling



Sea angling in the Inner Solway Firth



Note: this map is for illustrative purposes only



KEY



Cod



Flatfish



Wrasse



Ray



Dogfish/ Bull Huss



Bass



Eel



Mullet



Garfish



Mackerel



Conger eel



Coalfish



Tope



Pollock



Tackle shop



Boat launch area



Boat charter



Good spots for angling

Fishing with nature

These guidelines are intended to help you reduce any impact your angling activities may have on marine wildlife and habitats.

This will help to conserve the health of our coast and preserve the good image of angling.

Respect people's privacy and property.

- When close to a house or garden, keep a sensible distance from the house, use a path or track if there is one.
- Do not block access points for landowners, farmers and emergency vehicles.
- Launching of boats should be from an approved location.

Care for your environment.

- Respect wildlife and historic sites.
- Do not disturb wildlife.
- Respect the rules and byelaws of nature conservation sites.
- Take your litter home with you.
- Return all undersize fish alive to the sea and abide by minimum landing sizes. (see page 13 for MLS)
- Always report anything unusual e.g. pollution or items washed ashore, to SEPA. (Tel: 0800 807060)

Collecting and buying bait.

- When digging bait always back-fill holes for safety and to maintain intertidal habitats. Observe local bye-laws and regulations on the use of the coast and access to permanently and seasonally closed areas.
- Do not dig within the vicinity of conservation areas or moorings and slipways.
- Gather only what you need for a planned fishing trip.
- When collecting peeler (soft-shelled) crabs always carefully return rocks and weed to their original positions.
- Do not take berried (egg carrying) crabs.
- When fishing for mackerel or other bait fish, remember to abide by minimum size limits.
- If you prefer to buy bait from a supplier, use a species that is native to Britain.



Accidental loss of line and tackle

To reduce tackle loss, helping the environment and your pocket:

- Rigs can be set up so that a snagged weight will be discarded when pressure is applied via the main line, and thus enable the whole line to be retrieved.
- Snood (hook) lengths should always be of a lower breaking strain than the main line.
- Use the appropriate breaking strain line for the ground you are fishing.
- Do not use stainless steel hooks and consider using barbless hooks.
- Check the condition of your line regularly. Replace if old or damaged. Dispose of old line sensibly. Burn it or cut it into short lengths.

Catch and release

The following pointers will help ensure your catch is returned to the sea in a healthy condition.

- Where possible and where safe to do so, release your fish while it is still in the water.
- If you have to bring the fish ashore or onboard to unhook it, try to use a net (never gaff a fish you intend to release), handle the fish with wet hands and minimise the time the fish is kept out of the water.
- If you want to photograph or weigh your fish, handle firmly to prevent dropping or injury.
- Never hold a fish under the gill covers if it is to be returned.
- If you want to release all your fish, try using barbless or circle hooks.
- If you catch a tagged fish, send the complete tag and details of the species, length of the fish, location and time of capture to the address shown on the tag.
- There is a special code of practice for tope handling - www.save-our-sharks.org

More information on how to minimise your impact on the environment when fishing can be found on line at:

www.ccw.gov.uk

www.nfsa.org.uk/conserv/codes.htm

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

www.sacn.org.uk

www.fishscotland.co.uk



Safety information and useful organisations

Safety on the shore

- Do not fish alone in remote spots.
- At night, take more than one light.
- When rock fishing wear sensible footwear.
- Take a rope.
- Be aware of rising tides, especially in the Solway. Don't get cut off - check the tide times on <http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk>
- Take care when casting.
- Always carry a first aid kit.
- Watch out for wash from large vessels and freak waves.
- Take care on cliffs.



Boat fishing

Before Sailing

- Check weather and tides.
- Wear suitable clothing.
- Tell someone your expected return time.
- Do not overcrowd your boat.
- Do not take chances.

Have on board:

- Lifejackets for everyone.
- Spare fuel.
- Two anchors / ample rope.
- Oars or spare engine.
- Compass.
- First aid box.
- VHF radio / lights.

Wherever you are fishing:

Carry a mobile telephone and compass. Tell someone where you're going, when you will return and contact them if you are delayed, to save emergency services being called out unnecessarily.

IN AN EMERGENCY
DIAL 999

AND ASK FOR THE COASTGUARD

Tackle and bait shops

The Sports Shop, Stranraer.

Ardwell Marine, Ardwell.

Galloway Angling Centre, Newton Stewart

D.G Guns & Tackle, Newton Stewart

Polarpac, Kirkcudbright.

McCowan & Son, Castle Douglas.

McCowan & Son, Dalbeattie.

David McMillan, Dumfries.

Southwest Bait Supplies Scotland Ltd, Dumfries.

Broom Tackle Box, Annan.

Contact

Tel: 01776 702705

Tel: 01776 860297

Tel: 01671 401333

Tel: 01671 403404

Tel: 01557 330293

Tel: 01556 502009

Tel: 01556 610270

Tel: 01387 252075

Tel: 01387 270121

Tel: 01461 700 209

Charter Boats

Mike Watson (Stranraer)

www.fvorca.supanet.com

Tel: 01776 853 225

Ian Burrett (Luce Bay)

www.seafishingscotland.co.uk

Tel: 01776 840346

Ian Cerexhe (Portpatrick)

www.portpatrick.co.uk

Tel: 01776 810271

Steve Unsworth (Drummore)

www.charterboatsscotland.co.uk

Tel: 01557 330 337

Allan Peacock (Kippford)

www.dalbeattie.net

Tel: 01387 850413

Paul Millington (Portpatrick)

www.silverlinefishingtrips.co.uk

Tel: 07973 920835

Steve Holland (Port William/Isle of Whithorn)

Tel: 07979 806897

Local Clubs (Many run competitions throughout the year)

South West Federation of Sea Anglers

(All local clubs affiliated)

Tel:01557 330290

Other useful contacts

Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers (SFSA)

www.fishsea.co.uk

Tel: 01592 657520

Visit Scotland - www.visitscotland.com

Tel: 01387 253862

HM Coastguard

Tel: 0870 6006505

Borderlines

Tel: 01228 674519

www.borderlines.org.uk



Minimum landing sizes

Fish	Latin name	Recommended MLS (legal or above)
Ballan wrasse	<i>Labrus bergylta</i>	30 cm (12 inches)
Bass	<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	38 cm* (15 inches)
Bull huss	<i>Scyliorhinus stellaris</i>	91 cm (36 inches)
Coalfish (saithe)	<i>Pollachius virens</i>	36 cm (14 inches)
Cod	<i>Gadus Morhua</i>	35 cm (13 inches)
Common eel	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	36 cm (14 inches)
Conger eel	<i>Conger conger</i>	56 cm (22 inches)
Cuckoo wrasse	<i>Labrus mixtus</i>	31 cm (12 inches)
Dab	<i>Limanda limanda</i>	23 cm (9 inches)
Flounder	<i>Plactichthys flesus</i>	25 cm (10 inches)
Haddock	<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>	36 cm (14 inches)
Gurnard		23 cm (9 inches)
Lesser spotted dogfish	<i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>	40.5 cm (16 inches)
Ling	<i>Molva molva</i>	63 cm (25 inches)
Mackerel	<i>Scomber scombrus</i>	30 cm (11 inches)
Plaice	<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	27 cm (10 inches)
Pollock	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	36 cm (14 inches)
Smooth hound	<i>Mustelus mustelus</i>	61 cm (24 inches)
Sole	<i>Solea solea</i>	25 cm (10 inches)
Spurdog	<i>Squalus acanthias</i>	Measure and return
Thornback	<i>Raja clavata</i> -measure across wings	36 cm (14 inches)
Tope	<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>	Measure and return
Turbot	<i>Scophthalmus maxima</i>	30 cm (11 inches)
Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	28 cm (11 inches)
All rays/skates	- measure across wings	36 cm (14 inches)
All other fish		23 cm (9 inches)

*maybe increased to 40cm after April 2007

Acknowledgements and photo-credits

Acknowledgements

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Photo-credits

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