



# Essex Wildlife Trust



## Protecting marine wildlife for the future and for the people of Essex.



**Our seas are one of the most important resources we have here in the UK. Moreover, as an 'island nation', we all have strong connections with our coastline. It evokes strong feelings and fond memories of childhood holidays, salty air, exploring wild windswept beaches and rock pools, sand dunes, ice creams and, of course, fish and chips.**

Our memories are important to us and therefore the sea is important to us - but, for many of us, where the sea starts is where our knowledge stops.

At low tide, however, children catch small glimpses of creatures that were alien to them when they seized their buckets and headed off rock pooling. These habitats capture our imagination and hold our attention, marine inhabitants of different colours and names fascinate and enchant us - but then the tide comes and we leave these tiny temporary habitats to it.

Ask anyone if they care about the marine environment and what happens to it the shout will be a loud and unanimous 'YES!' so why have we allowed such reckless and careless treatment of it?

Some of the answers are because we do not feel like we have ownership of our seas, they are somewhere other people go, they are criss crossed with shipping lanes for containerships of terrifying size, the off shore environment is surely a dangerous one? We are right to exercise caution but this fear of the sea disconnects us from it, because of this we do not see the importance of it and the importance of its inhabitants to us on land.

Secondly, we do not see what is happening, and often we are fooled into thinking what we can not see does not affect us, but beneath the waves only feet from where we build our sand castles and eat our ice creams huge impacts are being exerted on the marine environment. We are losing biomass and biodiversity of our seas everyday, species we have not yet discovered may be being lost and still we do not feel the impacts.

But apply this to the terrestrial environment and we would be shocked, protests would be held frequently to challenge why the government is allowing such terrible damage to be inflicted, until recently as little as 0.001% of our marine environment was protected. But through determined campaigning and education the Wildlife Trusts living seas project is hoping to change peoples perceptions of the sea and show why it is important that we are as passionate about the marine environment as we are of the terrestrial one.

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## Changing perceptions

The wildlife Trust's throughout the UK are united in their vision of 'Living Seas' our ambition is to lead the way towards a healthy, productive and wildlife rich future for the UK coasts and seas.

Our ambitious plans will be achieved through focusing our efforts in four main areas;

1. marine protected areas and wildlife
2. fishing and seafood
3. marine planning and sustainable development
4. legislation and policy

We need to ensure that significant progress is made in each of these areas. While MPAs and wildlife are naturally the focus for much of our marine conservation work, we cannot hope to achieve Living Seas without also addressing the other themes. Even a far-reaching network of MPAs, for example, will fail to bring about recovery of marine ecosystems unless accompanied by improved controls on fishing and a sustainable approach to licensing marine industry. And none of this will be possible without Marine Acts throughout the UK and continuous improvements to marine policy. But how will we make a difference? To effect change, we need to address each of our Living Seas themes at a, national, regional and local level. We must play to our strengths, using our unique partnership, our reputation, our relationships, our supporters and our extensive experience. For each of the Living Seas themes, we will apply six cross-cutting Living Seas strategies:

- Advancing knowledge
- Plotting the course
- Finding common ground
- Influencing decisions
- Inspiring people
- Making waves

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## Living Landscapes and Living Seas Award

Why not start the year off by making a real difference for local wildlife. This is your chance to take part in the prestigious Living Landscapes or Living Seas Awards. A publicly recognised award that will be presented to organisations, groups, businesses and individuals.

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## Downloads

Filename	File size
<a href="#">Living Seas Leaflet.pdf</a>	632.8 KB
<a href="#">The Green Marine Wildlife Guide.pdf</a>	856.42 KB

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