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# Basking Sharks

## The Isle of Man is a global hotspot for basking sharks

Basking sharks are the second largest fish in the world and, although they can grow to over 10 metres long and weigh as much as 7 tonnes, they are gentle giants. They feed only on tiny animal plankton which they sieve out of the water by swimming through it with their vast mouths wide open.



In the summer, this plankton comes to the sea surface, followed by the sharks, which appear to be 'basking' in the sun, hence their name.

Between May and August, the Manx coastline welcomes this endangered species to feed on plankton blooms and possibly to mate and give birth in our waters.

### Catching a glimpse

Your best chance of spotting a basking shark is on a flat calm, sunny day – look out for their dark dorsal fins, slicing through the water.

Although they can be seen all round the island, the stretch from Peel on the West coast, down to the Calf of Man is where they can most reliably be found. They can



easily be seen from the shore, especially from spots like Peel Castle (see photo, right), Niarbyl, Port Erin and the Sound.

For an even closer view, you can also take a boat trip; we recommend you choose an experienced skipper who knows how to safely and responsibly drive around marine wildlife.

The team at Manx Basking Shark Watch is keen to hear about sightings of basking sharks in Manx waters so, if you are lucky enough to see one, please report it via the Manx Basking Shark Watch website - it's quick and easy to do, and really helps with ongoing research: [www.manxbaskingsharkwatch.org](http://www.manxbaskingsharkwatch.org)

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