

Contacts

There are lots of information sources on the Forth. Some are listed here:

Forth and Tay Navigation Service (FTNS) – Duty Harbour Master
Tel: +44(0)1324 498584

Forth Pilots Tel: +44(0)131 552 1420

Coastguard (non-emergency) Tel: +44(0)1333 450666

Tides www.easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide

Weather www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/marine/inshore_forecast.html
For telephone forecasts contact Marinecall – there is a charge for this service.
Tel 0871 200 3985 for initial enquiries or 09068 500 452 for the Forth.

HM Revenue & Customs Tel: 0845 723 1110 (National Yachtline for information on leaving or arriving from a place outside the United Kingdom)

Harbours For more information on each harbour mentioned here (and others on the Forth) see the *East Coast of Scotland Pilot Handbook* produced by the Forth Yacht Clubs Association or *The Yachtsman's Pilot to North and East Scotland* by Martin Lawrence.

Forth Yacht Clubs Association For information on all clubs in the area and sailing in the Forth. See www.fyca.org.uk

Port Edgar Marina and Sailing School Purpose built marina with full range of facilities. Tel: +44(0)131 331 3330 or www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/list-105

RYA Scotland For information on all types of sailing. Tel: +44(0)131 317 7388 or www.ryascotland.org.uk

Royal National Lifeboat Association (RNLI) has very useful information on Sea Safety. Tel: 0845 122 6999 or www.rnli.org.uk/seasafety

British Waterways Scotland For general information on the Forth and Clyde and Union Canals. Tel +44(0)141 332 6936 or www.scottishcanals.co.uk

South East Scotland Watersports Guide – Pocket Guide Available from East Lothian Council. Tel: +44(0)1620 827827 or www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Wildlife For more information on wildlife in the Forth download leaflet *Wildlife around the Forth* from www.forthestuaryforum.co.uk

Find out more about Scottish wildlife from www.snh.org.uk

Whale or dolphin strandings. Contact Strandings Co-ordinator.
Tel. +44 (0)1463 243030 or 07979 245893 or www.sac.ac.uk

Emergency numbers	
Coastguard	Tel. 999 and ask for Coastguard
Police	Tel. 999 and ask for Police
Pollution	Tel. SEPA on 0800 807060

VHF Channels	
Forth Coastguard and Emergency	Ch: 16
Forth and Tay Navigation Service	Ch: 71; 20
Grangemouth Harbour Masters	Ch: 14
Leith Harbour	Ch: 12
Forth Pilots (& pilot cutter)	Ch: 72

Harbours

There are a variety of safe and attractive harbours all the way up the Forth on both coasts. Below are those with good facilities for the recreational boat user and visiting yachts. All require caution if approached at low water or in a strong onshore wind.

Harbour	Port Edgar Marina	Anstruther	Granton	Dunbar
Fuel	✓		✓	✓
Food	✓	✓	✓	✓
Toilets	✓	✓	✓	✓
Showers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Waste	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nearest village/town	South Queensferry	Anstruther	Edinburgh	Dunbar
Contact tel	0131 331 3330	01333 310836	0131 552 8560	01368 865404
Channel	80	11	n/a	6



Facilities at Granton are within the Royal Forth Yacht Club – check in advance for opening times. Fuel availability depends on tide and staff – check in advance. Pontoons are managed by Edinburgh Marina Ltd.

Listed below are some of the smaller harbours around the Forth. Most are attractive former fishing harbours which welcome visitors but have fewer facilities. Access may be limited to certain states of the tide. The little visited harbours of the Upper Forth are worth exploring. The *East Coast of Scotland Pilot Handbook* has more details on these and other harbours. See the Contacts box.

Fife	Lothians	Upper Forth
Crail	North Berwick	Blackness
Cellardyke	Port Seton	Bo' Ness
St Monans	Cockenzie	Alloa (limited to 9.0 m vertical clearance under the Kincardine and Clackmannanshire Bridges)
Elie	Fisherrow	
Dysart	South Queensferry	
Aberdour		Stirling (limited to 9.0 m as above and 3.5m clearance at the Taylorton Bridge close to Stirling)
North Queensferry		
Limekilns		

Looking after the Forth

Everyone has a part to play in helping to protect and look after the wildlife and water environment of the Forth. By taking a few simple steps you can minimise your impact whilst out on the water.



- Speed** – the wash from speeding boats or personal water craft (jet skis) can disturb nesting or feeding birds. Maintain a slow speed near the shore or islands.
- Wildlife on the water** – watch out for dolphins, seals and rafts of birds – steer well clear of them.
- Resources** – try to reduce your use of fossil fuels – go with the tide in the Forth and sail where possible. Invest in solar panels to charge your batteries and choose low energy electrics.
- Non-native species** – help prevent the spread of marine invasive species by washing off your anchor and chain as you recover it and by scrubbing down dinghies, personal water craft and gear before you leave the area.
- Litter** – take it home, recycle or put with household waste **or** use the facilities provided at the harbour or marina. Litter, especially plastic litter is dangerous to wildlife and unsightly. Ensure loose items do not blow overboard.
- Marine Toilets** – protect the water quality of the Forth by using shore based facilities where possible. Pump out facilities for marine toilets with a holding tank are available at the Falkirk Wheel Boat Lift and Carron Sea Lock. Use only low phosphate or environmentally friendly cleaners.
- Fuel** – avoid over filling, use a funnel to prevent spills and where possible, refuel containers on land – at least 10m from the shore. Carry oil/fuel absorbent socks and a spill kit.

For more information and easy to follow advice on protecting the environment whilst boating, go to www.thegreenblue.org.uk

The Forth and Clyde Canal

The canal gives boats access to and from the west coast of Scotland.

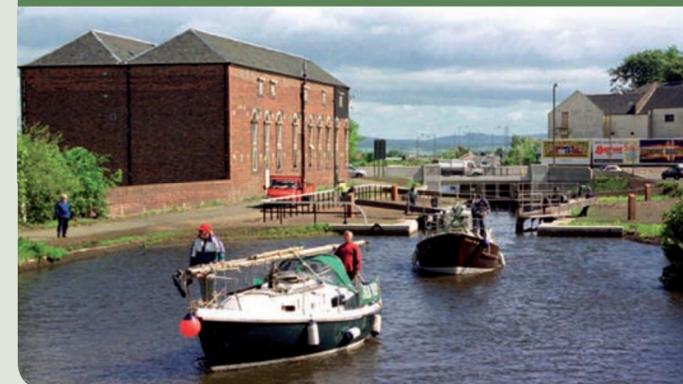
There are depth and overhead restrictions once you reach the River Carron entrance. There is a limited time for access each tide. Plan ahead and consult the Tides and Currents Information and the tidal predictions for canal Sea Lock.

British Waterways recommends that before making passage on the River Carron upstream of Grangemouth Yacht Club, boaters should refer to their British Waterways *Skipper's Guide*, available from www.scottishcanals.co.uk

Contact the Grangemouth Sea Lock: Tel +44(0)1324 483034 or 07810 794468

Passage as far as Grangemouth Yacht Club is straightforward from both three hours before until two hours after high water.

Watch out for large vessels entering and leaving Grangemouth docks. Note the main shipping channel and keep clear and well to the north.



ON THE FORTH



A leisure craft users' guide to the Firth of Forth

FORTH ESTUARY FORUM

Forth Byelaws

Forth Ports PLC, as the port authority, has byelaws for the Forth. Most relate to commercial shipping. Recreational boat users should note these key points:

- Hound Point Marine Terminal – pleasure craft should not approach within 100 metres of Hound Point.
- Braefoot Marine Terminal – pleasure craft should not approach within 100 metres of any vessel berthed at the Terminal and keep well clear of any vessel manoeuvring in Mortimer's Deep.
- Safe swimming at Portobello – power craft should stay at least 250 metres away from the shore at Portobello. This is a Water Craft Exclusion Zone to protect swimmers.
- Water Skiing – water skiing and aqua-planing should only take place in designated areas. Any water skiing or aqua-planing outside those areas requires the permission of the Harbourmaster.
- Hawes Pier – a speed limit of 4 knots adjacent to the pier.

Forth Ports issues Notices to Mariners – check their website for up to date information. (<http://www.forthports.co.uk/ports/marine/noticeToMariners/>) or local notice boards. Forth Byelaws can viewed in full on www.forthports.co.uk/ports/marine/legislation

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The Forum is grateful to the many individuals and organisations for their help in compiling this leaflet including Forth Ports PLC, The Green Blue, RYA Scotland and FYCA. Forth Estuary Forum is solely responsible for any errors.

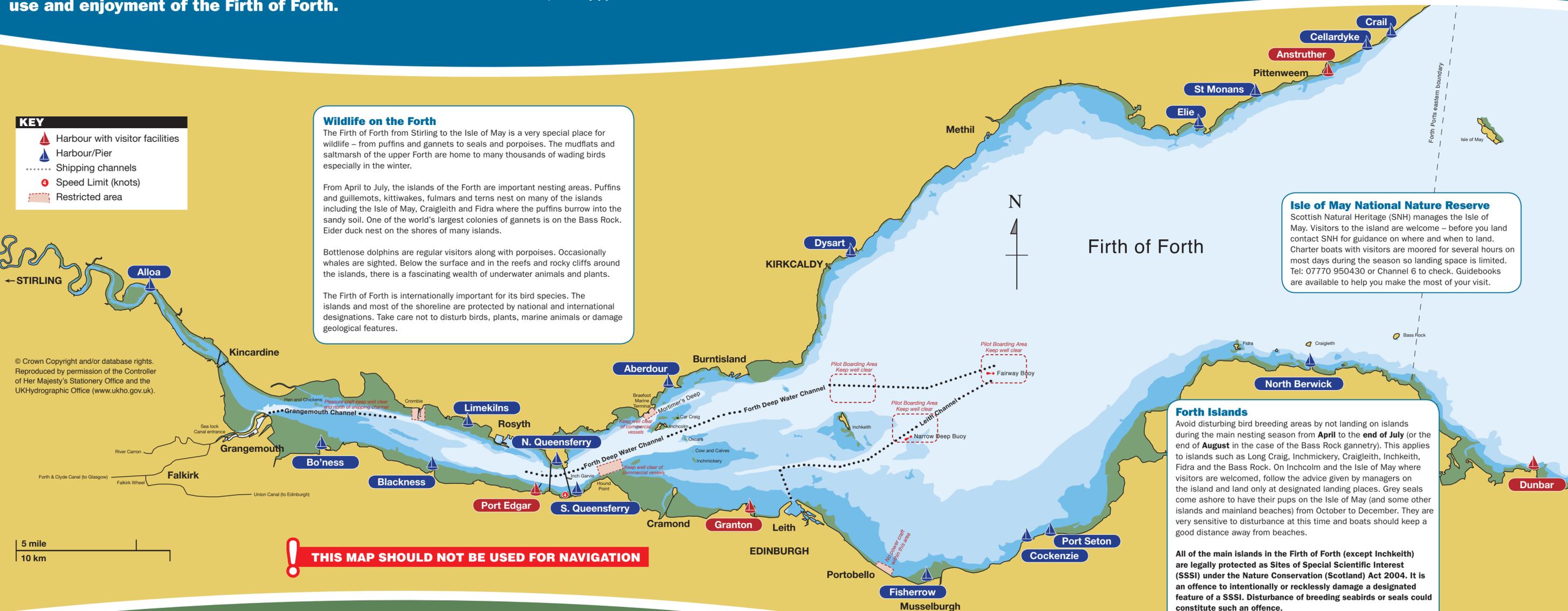
The Forth Estuary Forum is a voluntary partnership of organisations around the Forth with an interest in promoting the wise and sustainable use of the Forth. For more information, see www.forthestuaryforum.co.uk

A pdf version of this guide is available on www.forthestuaryforum.co.uk
Photography © Laurie Campbell & Liz Tulloch

Welcome to the Firth of Forth. This short guide aims to help you enjoy your experience here. Whether you are a recreational sailor, a jet skier, windsurfer, canoeist or use any sort of boat, the information will help your safe use and enjoyment of the Firth of Forth.

The guide gives brief information for boat users on **safety** and looking after the **environment**. The Firth of Forth provides excellent sailing waters and opportunities for all kinds of water sports and activities including sea angling and diving. The numerous small harbours, anchorages and landings provide attractive and interesting destinations for a day out and safe moorings. The Forth has over a dozen islands all with interesting historical and wildlife stories to tell and waiting to be explored. The whole of the Forth is a wonderful area to see wildlife including breeding sea birds, like puffins and gannets, seals, whales and dolphins. Enjoy your time on the Forth!

One of the aims of this guide is to prevent large ships and small craft meeting in close quarters situations. Please read the safety information carefully to avoid this happening to you! This guide is just an introduction to the Forth – more information is available by following up links or contacts to other organisations. See the Contacts box on the back of this leaflet. The information in this leaflet is advisory. Please make your own checks and take responsibility for your own safety and the safety of others.



Wildlife on the Forth
 The Firth of Forth from Stirling to the Isle of May is a very special place for wildlife – from puffins and gannets to seals and porpoises. The mudflats and saltmarsh of the upper Forth are home to many thousands of wading birds especially in the winter.
 From April to July, the islands of the Forth are important nesting areas. Puffins and guillemots, kittiwakes, fulmars and terns nest on many of the islands including the Isle of May, Craigleith and Fidra where the puffins burrow into the sandy soil. One of the world's largest colonies of gannets is on the Bass Rock. Eider duck nest on the shores of many islands.
 Bottlenose dolphins are regular visitors along with porpoises. Occasionally whales are sighted. Below the surface and in the reefs and rocky cliffs around the islands, there is a fascinating wealth of underwater animals and plants.
 The Firth of Forth is internationally important for its bird species. The islands and most of the shoreline are protected by national and international designations. Take care not to disturb birds, plants, marine animals or damage geological features.

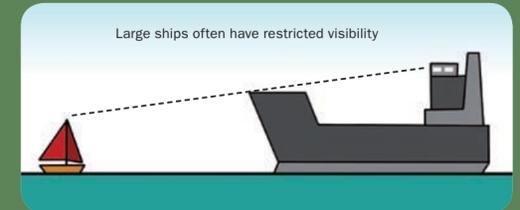
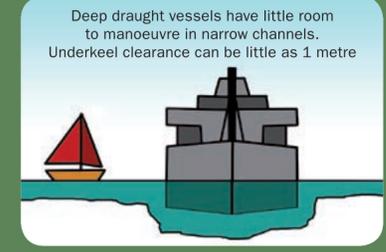
Isle of May National Nature Reserve
 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) manages the Isle of May. Visitors to the island are welcome – before you land contact SNH for guidance on where and when to land. Charter boats with visitors are moored for several hours on most days during the season so landing space is limited. Tel: 07770 950430 or Channel 6 to check. Guidebooks are available to help you make the most of your visit.

Forth Islands
 Avoid disturbing bird breeding areas by not landing on islands during the main nesting season from **April to the end of July** (or the end of **August** in the case of the Bass Rock gannetry). This applies to islands such as Long Craig, Inchmickery, Craigleith, Inchkeith, Fidra and the Bass Rock. On Inchcolm and the Isle of May where visitors are welcomed, follow the advice given by managers on the island and land only at designated landing places. Grey seals come ashore to have their pups on the Isle of May (and some other islands and mainland beaches) from October to December. They are very sensitive to disturbance at this time and boats should keep a good distance away from beaches.
All of the main islands in the Firth of Forth (except Inchkeith) are legally protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage a designated feature of a SSSI. Disturbance of breeding seabirds or seals could constitute such an offence.
 See the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code for more advice. www.marinecode.org

THIS MAP SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

For your own safety

The Firth of Forth is one of the busiest shipping areas in the UK. Commercial and naval ships travel up and down the Forth. Vessels can travel faster than you think and their ability to manoeuvre is limited. Many vessels use the navigation channels within the river – they cannot move out of this channel so may not be able to take avoiding action.



Be alert – keep a lookout especially at night and in fog. Look astern. Remember it takes time and considerable distance for a large vessel to stop. A vessel that is slowing down has less ability to manoeuvre.

Radio – monitor channel 71 (Forth and Tay Navigation Service) to get advance warning of vessels. Listen to the Coastguard on Channel 16 for all safety messages.

Fishing Gear – watch out for lobster creel ropes and buoys especially near the coast.

For information and advice on safety obtain a copy of **Sea Safety – The Complete Guide**, available as a booklet and CD Rom from the RNLI. See Contacts box.

Forth and Tay Navigation Service monitors all shipping traffic in the Forth. It is manned 24 hours a day, every day. Trained operators manage movements of all commercial and naval ships in the Forth.

Pilots guide all vessels over 45 metres in length into and out of the commercial ports. Pilots board vessels north of Inchkeith, at the Fairway Buoy or the Narrow Deep Buoy.

Small boat users should look out for ships stopping and manoeuvring in these areas.

Before you leave:

- Although these precautions seem obvious many people forget or disregard basic safety checks.
- Make sure everyone wears a lifejacket.
- Check you have enough **fuel** and safety equipment such as **flares, lifejackets** for all onboard (including the correct size for children), **compass** and a **VHF radio**.
- Check the **weather** and sea conditions before you leave – conditions can change very quickly. Like other shallow estuaries, winds can quickly throw up short, steep seas especially if the wind is against the tide. See Contacts box for weather information.
- Plan ahead** –make sure someone on shore knows your plans.
- Make sure no one is taking **alcohol** or **drugs** – it is illegal to be in charge of a craft whilst under the influence and you can endanger lives.
- Are you familiar with any navigational dangers? Get an up to date chart and check a current pilot book or almanac.

5 SAFETY TIPS YOU CAN COUNT ON

1. Wear a lifejacket
2. Check your engine and fuel
3. Tell others where you're going
4. Carry some means of calling for help
5. Keep an eye on weather and tides

SeaSafety
 Regional Authority (RNLI)

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