The East Grampian Coast

www.stateofthecoast.scot

Foreword

Scotland's coast is one of our greatest shared assets—dynamic, diverse, and deeply woven into our history, culture, and economy. From rugged cliffs and sandy bays to busy harbours and fragile estuaries, our coastline supports communities, wildlife, and livelihoods. Yet it is also a place of constant change, shaped by natural processes and increasingly influenced by human activity and climate change.

The State Of The Coast (SOTC) project provides an invaluable resource for understanding these changes. By bringing together accessible, up-to-date information, it enables everyone—from school pupils and students to local councillors, community groups, and visitors—to explore how our coasts function and why they matter. Crucially, it helps us all to make informed decisions about how we manage, protect, and enjoy these environments.

As sea levels rise and weather patterns shift, the need for informed, collaborative action has never been greater. This project highlights not only the challenges we face but also the opportunities to build resilience and safeguard our coastal heritage for future generations.

I encourage you to engage with this resource, share its insights, and play your part in shaping a sustainable future for Scotland's coasts.

David R Green
Chair of EGCP

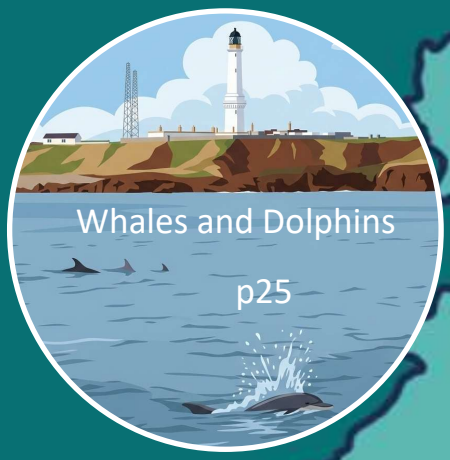
Contents

A list of image credits can be found at www.stateofthecoast.scot/acknowledgement

Author Ian Hay. Design by Iona Macleod and Rosa Payne. Editing by David R. Green, Derek MacDonald, Ewan Cameron and Corinne Meinert .

12km

Land area covered in this guide



Understanding the State of the Coast.

In order to enjoy the benefits that the East Grampian Coast brings to the people who live and visit it, we need to look after it. To do this we need to understand it so we can make the most of opportunities and reduce impacts. To help do this, the East Grampian Coastal Partnership has been researching and monitoring the coast for over 20 years. However, this information needs to be in the hands of as many people as possible.

In 2009 EGCP published our first State of the Coast Document. While this document has proved very useful informing planning policy as recently as 2024, it is now out of date. To update it, EGCP has created a range of ways in which you can learn about the coast.

This document aims to understand the people, economy, wildlife and environment that share this space. It offers a snapshot and the basic facts in a way that is understandable for people from 9 to 109 year olds.

This does have limitations, things change, new information becomes available and, while every effort has been made, mistakes do happen. Because of this the East Grampian Coastal partnership has created the www.stateofthecoast.scot website.

The State of the Coast website covers over 300 topics and aims to be a first port of call for anyone looking for information. This gives an understandable summary of the key points while signposting sources of far more detailed information.

With Thanks

Our work on State of the Coast has been delivered by a group of dedicated paid interns. We wish to thank them for their excellent work.

State of the Coast 25 and 26 – Cathryn Lovie and Mariia Topol

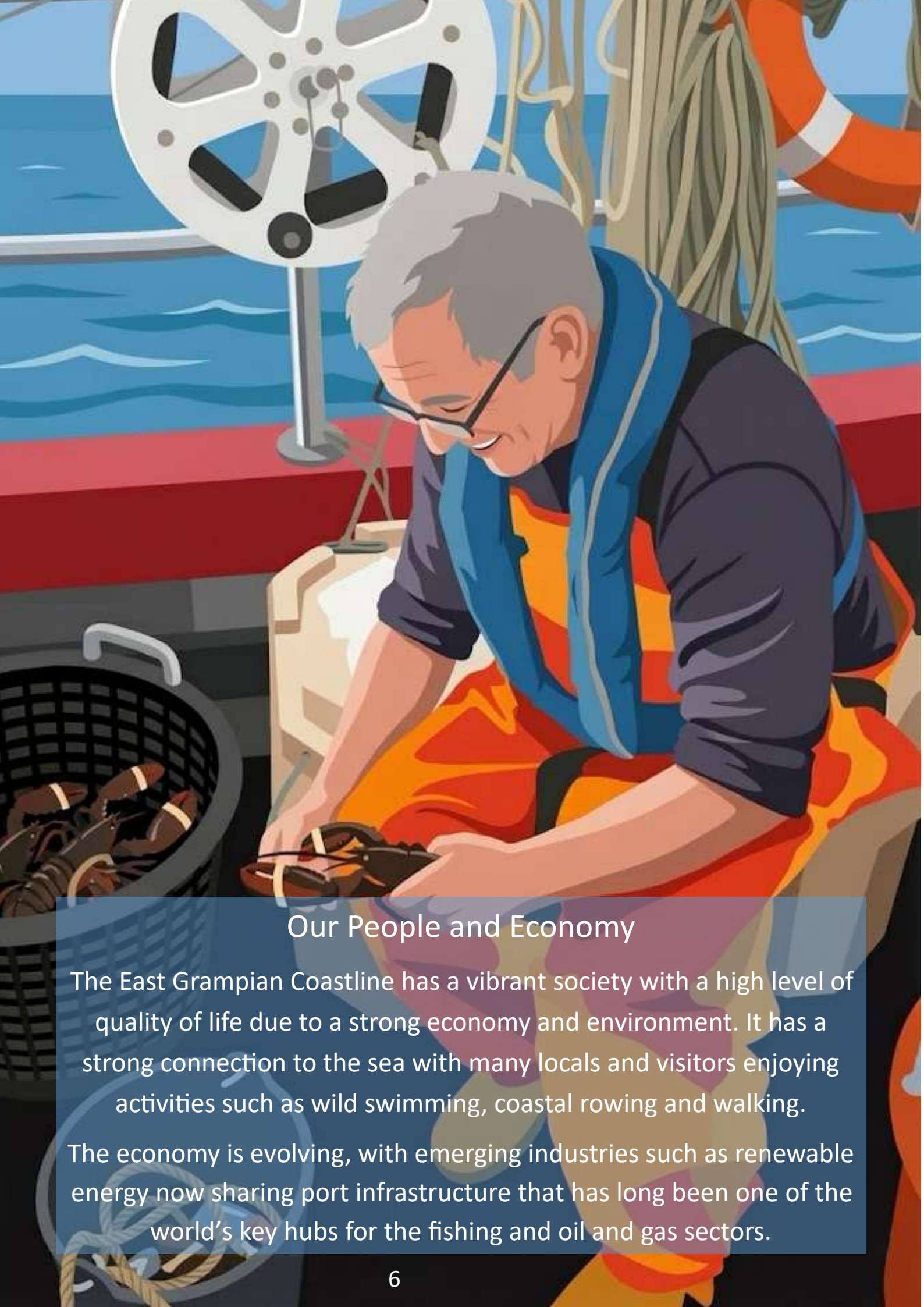
State of the Coast 25 - Adam Barker, Charlotte Tomlinson, George Grantham

State of the Coast 26 – Corinne Meinert, Iona MacLeod, Rosa Payne, Shaleen Sharma

I would also like to thank Marine Fund Scotland for supporting this project. David R. Green, EGCP Chair, for oversight, expertise and editing, and the EGCP Directors, Mike Skitmore, Stephen Paterson and John Watson for their continued hard work and dedication.

Ian Hay

Project Manager – Marine Planning



Our People and Economy

The East Grampian Coastline has a vibrant society with a high level of quality of life due to a strong economy and environment. It has a strong connection to the sea with many locals and visitors enjoying activities such as wild swimming, coastal rowing and walking.

The economy is evolving, with emerging industries such as renewable energy now sharing port infrastructure that has long been one of the world's key hubs for the fishing and oil and gas sectors.

People and Communities of the Coast

Where is the coast?

This may seem an obvious question, but there are many answers. For The East Grampian Coastal Partnership, the coast is the area between the highwater mark and 12km offshore, so that means we are interested in some things that happen many miles inland, such as water pollution which affects our bathing beaches.

Regarding people on the coast, we had a problem. The main source of information is data from the census that happens every 10 years. This data is collected for small areas of land known as wards. Due to this, we had to select the wards that best match the coastal area rather than selecting a distance in land from the coast.

Who lives on the coast?

The East Grampian Coast hosts the area's only city, Aberdeen (pop 231,800) and largest and third largest towns in Aberdeenshire, Peterhead (19,700), and Fraserburgh (12,900). These are major economic centres providing employment for many of the smaller communities in the area.

Old vs young

Compared to the rest of Scotland, the East Grampian Coast has more people under 45 and less people over 45. The number of young people is reducing but not at the same rate as the rest of Scotland.

Young people

The proportion of the population that are children is slightly above the national average, but it is the age group between 16 and 44 where the biggest difference exists with the rest of Scotland. These are mainly workers, perhaps surprisingly, the number of young people in full time education is less than the average, despite the area's universities.

Older people

The area has significantly less people in the age groups over 45 but surprisingly, it has many more retired people as a proportion of its population. This is likely due to a higher proportion of the population being able to give up work at a younger age.

How healthy are we?

One way to measure how we are doing is by measuring healthy life expectancy. This basically records the age when people feel they are no longer able to do the things they want to do.

In Aberdeenshire, the healthy life expectancy is now 67 years old, one of the highest in Scotland, with Aberdeen residents expecting to live around 61 healthy years. These are both above the Scottish average, but major differences can happen in a short distance with some wealthy communities having the expectation of 25 more healthy years than their neighbours in poorer areas.
Since the publication of the 2009 State of the East Grampian Coast report, the average Scottish healthy life expectancy has increased by eight months for men, but has decreased by over two years for women.

The problem with healthy life expectancy

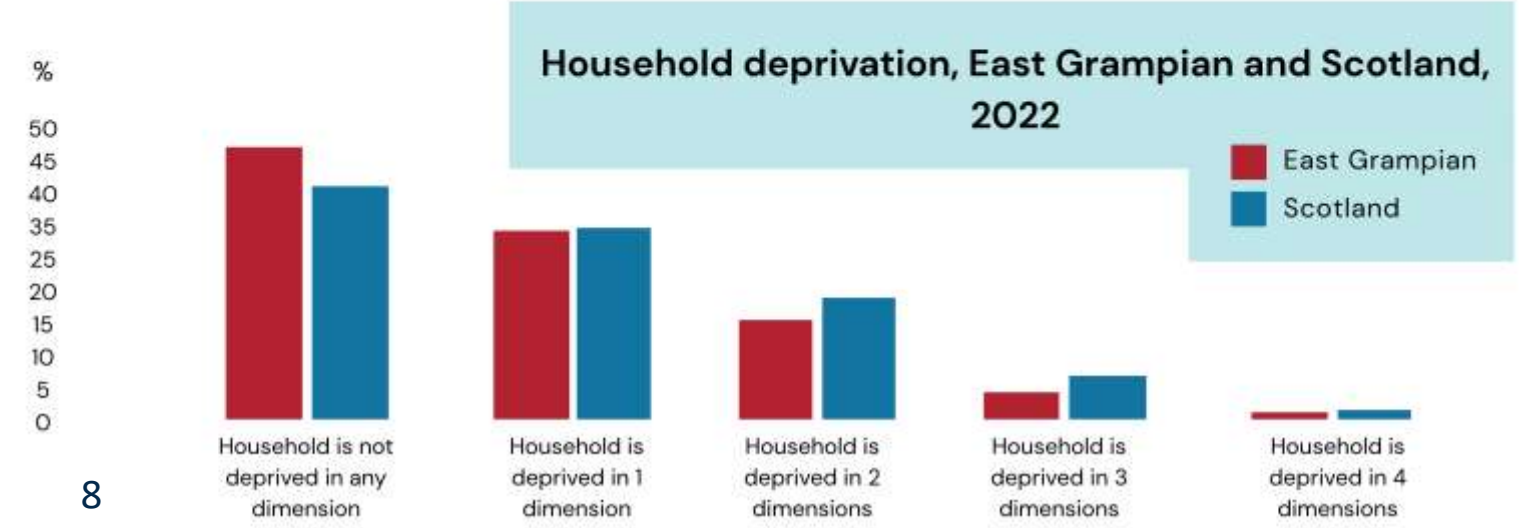
Using healthy life expectancy as a measure has a problem, it is self-measured, people are asked if they are feeling healthy. A positive person with major physical issues could say they do feel healthy, while a negative person with physically little wrong may say they are unhealthy. Therefore, it could be said that this is a measure that combines both mental and physical health.
The area also has a greater proportion of people who are classified as 'long term sick' than the rest of Scotland.

Deprivation

Household deprivation is measured against:

1. Unemployment
2. Low levels of education
3. Disability
4. Poor housing

The East Grampian Coast has significantly more households with no forms of deprivation than the Scottish Average, with 46% against the national 40% of households with some form of deprivation.



Recreation

One of the great benefits of living by the coast is the wide range of recreational activities that it offers. From walking to sailing, swimming to wildlife watching, the East Grampian Coast is a great place for locals and visitors, indeed it appears to be increasing in popularity which can bring its own pressures. For UK travellers, the coast is the most popular location for a domestic trip.

Users of the coast

Many people will have noticed an apparent increase in coastal recreation in the past five years. Before 2020, coastal swimming, paddle boarding, and the use of saunas with a saltwater plunge to cooldown were not a common sight.

However, it is supposed that the lockdowns and travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic led many to discovering what they have on their coastal doorstep. Unfortunately, there is a lack of data to back this observation up.

During 2025, EGCP commissioned a student project to survey beach users, the results are used for this section.

Walking

From a small walk to a full day hike, the East Grampian Coast has a range of options supported by the coastal core path network. Thanks to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, first introduced in 2003, which established statutory public rights of responsible access to land and inland waters. This is very unusual with people having far greater access to the countryside than those living in the rest of the UK. Access, together with the stunning scenery makes walking very popular, Scotland's People and Nature Survey 2023/24 found that 61% of people in Scotland visit the outdoors for recreation at least once a week, with 17% visiting the outdoors typically every day. 20% of all outdoor visits for recreation were to the seaside - including beaches, coasts, and cliffs.
In the 2025 EGCP Coastal Recreation Survey, coastal walking was the most popular activity with 180 respondents enjoying a hike on the coast.
Plans are currently being developed for a new long distance path connecting the whole of the East Grampian Coast.

EGCP holds regular whale and dolphin watches where local experts help you see and record these incredible creatures. Details can be found on the EGCP website.

Swimming

Wild swimming has greatly increased in popularity in recent years, with people taking to the seas in growing numbers all year around. This was the second most common activity for those who took part in the 2025 East Grampian Coastal Recreation Survey.

Wildlife watching

With packed seabird cliffs, Scotland's largest seal haul out site, and dolphins in the city centre, it is perhaps not surprising that coastal wildlife watching is a popular activity.

The key locations for this are the RSPB Loch of Strathbeg, The Longhaven Cliffs, the Bullers of Buchan, Forvie National Nature Reserve including the Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen Harbour, Fowlsheugh, and St Cyrus National Nature Reserve. 70 survey respondents listed wildlife watching as a regular coastal activity. This can lead to pressure on some wildlife watching sites, but work is being done to educate people about what is acceptable.

Snorkelling and diving

With many people enjoying wild swimming, it is not surprising that snorkelling and diving are both popular activities, allowing people to explore our undersea wildlife.

EGCP has worked with the Scottish Wildlife Trust to produce guides to snorkelling in our area.

Coastal fishing

The East Grampian Coast has many popular fishing spots, or marks, as they are known. In the summer, many people fish for mackerel at Peterhead, the cliffs south of Aberdeen, Stonehaven, and Inverbervie. In winter, many of these locations are popular with spots to fish for cod, especially when there is a strong easterly wind.
Sea angling was the 11th most popular activity.

Sailing

Popular in Peterhead and Stonehaven, sailing is limited on the East Grampian Coast due to the exposed nature of the coastline. However, paddle boarding and sea kayaking are also popular.

Surfing

Catching a wave is our 8th most popular activity, with surf schools in Aberdeen and Fraserburgh. Surfers often brave the worst of our weather and can also be exposed to the times when water quality is at its lowest. This has led to the surf community becoming very involved in improving our seas.

Coastal rowing

Starting in the early 2010s, coastal rowing has become a popular community sport which starts with volunteers building their own boats before crews are found to enjoy casual exercise with friends, or heated competition at the many regattas in Scotland or internationally.

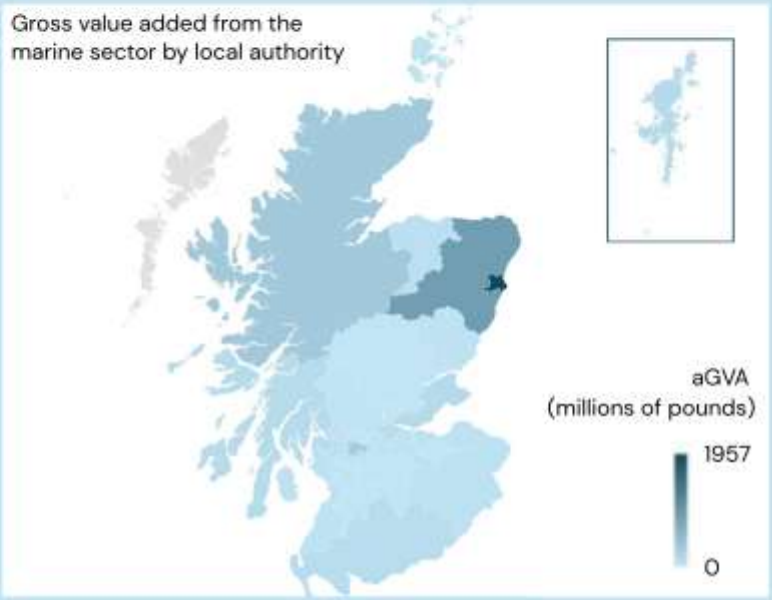
Coastal & seaside tourism Key facts and figures

- 1.8m domestic overnight trips annually
- 38% of international visitors visit a beach
- 16m domestic day trips annually
- 29% of domestic overnight trips taken in South of Scotland
- £391m domestic overnight spend annually
- 4 days average domestic trip length

Valuing the Coast

The sea can be valued in many ways such as the joy it brings to us personally, and its importance to the wildlife and environment that we depend on. It can also be valued in terms of the money and jobs that it creates. In 2022, the value of the marine industry to the Scottish Economy was £4.9 billion. Of this, over 57% was generated by businesses within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

In Scotland, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are the hub of this economy thanks to the energy sector, fishing, and ports. 21% of Aberdeen's total economy is based on the seas, while the figure is 12% for Aberdeenshire. In comparison, the figures for Edinburgh and Glasgow are less than 2%.



***Change in aGVA (a measure of value to the economy) by marine sector in millions of pounds, 2022 to 2023**

Marine & coastal tourism	↓
Renting & leasing	→
Freight water transport	↑
Passenger water transport	↓
Construction & water transport services	↑
Ship building	↑
Seafood processing	↓
Support for oil and gas	↓
Aquaculture	↑
Fishing	↑

The marine economy is changing, with some sectors such as offshore wind, fishing, and ship building increasing between 2022 and 2023. While servicing the offshore oil and gas industry, seafood processing, and tourism saw a decrease.

The aGVA for Seafood processing and passenger water transport fell between 2022 and 2023. Aquaculture and ship building had the largest increases.

Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2023 - gov.scot

↓ Decrease ↑ Increase

→ No change

Ports and Harbours

Moving goods, fish, and people

All of the major towns and cities on the East Grampian Coast are based around their harbour. From small villages like Colliston and Johnshaven to the mighty ports of Aberdeen, Peterhead, and Fraserburgh. The local economy either depends, or depended historically, on harbours to access the sea, either to allow for trade, or to support the fishing fleet.

Small harbours

Our small harbours are now mainly used for recreation and small-scale fishing for the inshore fleet. Many of these ports were built during the herring boom, years which peaked in 1907 when Sottish ports exported over 2 million barrels of herring to the continent. Since then, the inshore fishing fleet has declined with most boats now targeting crab and lobster.

For many villages, the harbour still provides the cultural heart of the community with recreation increasing and access to the sea attracting people to visit and live. However, with the loss of harbour fees from the fishing industry, keeping the harbour walls in good condition now takes considerable local effort.

Fraserburgh

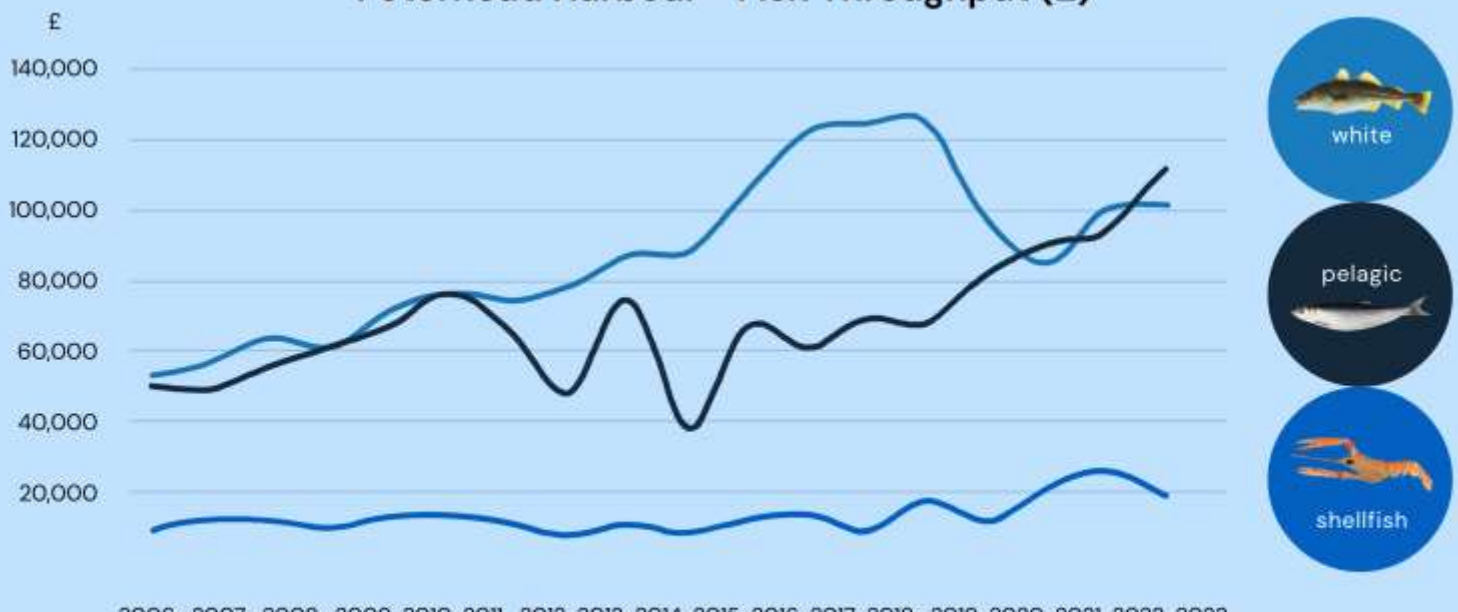
At times the largest shellfish port in Europe (the title moves between Fraserburgh and Peterhead depending on the year). Fraserburgh serves the fishing industry but is also increasingly used for the offshore wind sector, with the Ocean Wind control centre for the Moray East Windfarm.

Fraserburgh is also looking to make a major expansion of the port facilities with an increase from 170 to 742 meters of quayside for large vessels. It is also home to many businesses that serve the fishing industry.

Peterhead

There can be few bodies of water that combine more uses in such a small area. Peterhead Harbour includes Europe's largest white fish port, a key supply hub for the North Sea oil and gas industry, a marina, yacht club, caravan park, the cleanest designated bathing waters on our coast, and a wide range of wildlife above and below the water surface. Since the original State of the East Grampian Coast Report in 2009, the volume of fish landed at Peterhead has increased, with gains in shellfish (langoustine), white fish (cod), and pelagic fish (mackerel and herring).

Cargo has had a mixed history in the port with a large increase followed by a decline to lower than 2006 numbers.



Aberdeen

The Port of Aberdeen has the largest quayside area of any port in Scotland with over 7,700 meters. This increased in 2024 with the opening of the South Harbour which gave an additional 1,500 meters of deep-water access. Aberdeen was once a major fishing port but this has been replaced by vessels servicing the oil and gas industry.

£50.7 million turnover

7,128 vessels handled

30 international trading countries

116 employees

Cargo tonnage **3,417,836 tonnes**

Vessel tonnage **27,387,507 tonnes**

21,940 cruise guests

207,318 ferry passengers

Moving people

The Port of Aberdeen is also a major hub for the movement of people across the sea. NorthLink Ferries (also referred to as Serco NorthLink Ferries) operates a lifeline of passenger and vehicle ferry services between Aberdeen and the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland.

NorthLink took over the route from P&O in 1999. Since July 2012, it has been operated by international services company Serco.

Since the 2009 State of the Coast Report, ferry traffic to the Northern Isles has grown steadily with the exception of the COVID years. This service is now close to capacity through much of the year. Freight traffic has also grown in this period.

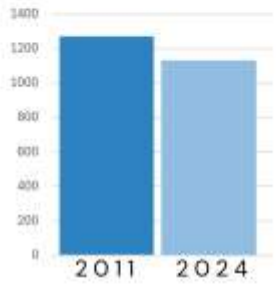
Serco NorthLink Ferries also supports EGCP via the NORCET Whale and Dolphin surveys which use the vessels to record marine life on their routes. With the addition of the South Harbour, Aberdeen has also seen a major increase in cruise traffic with 73 planned visits from cruise ships in 2026, up from 29 in 2019.

Fishing

With two of the largest fishing ports in Europe, the East Grampian Coast is central to Scotland and the UK's fishing fleet. The area has a long fishing history with many small harbours that were built as part of the Herring boom such as Port Errol and Johnshaven. While the herring boom is long past, the communities and heritage remain.

Economic impact

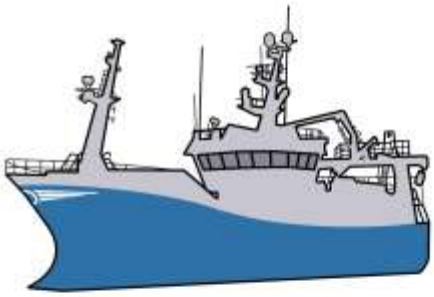
In 2024, 1,134 people worked on fishing boats in the East Grampian area out of 3,753 nationally. Since 2011, this has dropped by 12% with most of that loss coming from Fraserburgh. Nationally, the drop has been much larger with a reduction of 25%. Almost one in three fishers in Scotland operate from the East Grampian Coast.



Vessels

Since 2011, the Number of vessels based in the East Grampian Area has decreased slightly (from to 388 to 386) with stable numbers of small inshore boats (below 10 meters), a large decrease in boats from 10 to 24 meters, and an increase in large boats over 24 meters.

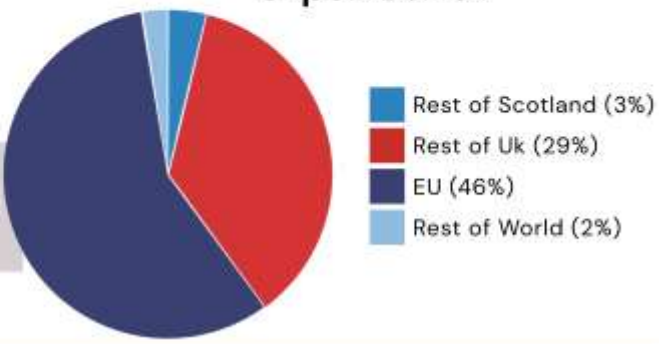
Of the largest vessels, those over 40 meters, more than 50% of Scotland's Fleet is based in Fraserburgh and Peterhead. While these boats operate from the area, much of the catch is landed elsewhere having been sold at sea via auction. From 2025, these boats must land at least 55% of their catch in Scottish ports.



Sustainability

73% of Scottish fish stocks are judged to be fished sustainably. This is the highest level since monitoring started in 1983

Where is fish processed in the North East of Scotland exported to?



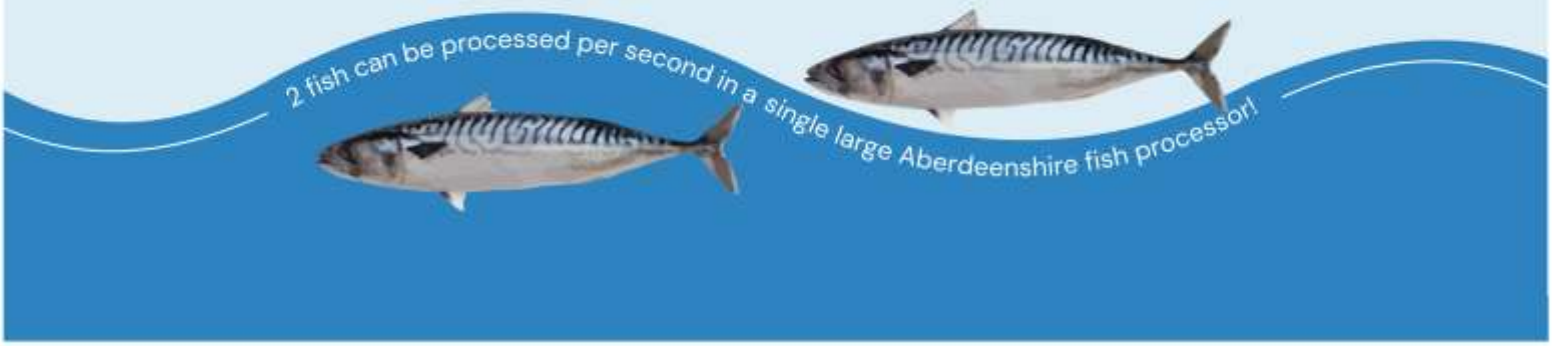
Imports and exports

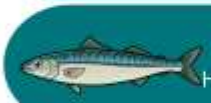
Scotland exports around £1 billion of Seafood, including farmed salmon, a year making it our biggest food export. The largest overseas market is France, with the Netherlands and Poland being major EU markets. Outside the EU, the USA, China and Canada are the top destinations. In terms of Imports, we only have UK wide figures with Norway, China, Iceland, and Vietnam supplying the majority of fish. Tuna, salmon, shrimp/prawns, cod, and haddock are the main species imported.

Fish processors

Fish processors range from very small to major factories that can process over 35,000 tonnes a year, that equals more than 1.2 million individual fish per week, or 120 per minute!!!

The fish processing industry was worth £372million in 2017 to the Scottish economy. Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City are major hubs for this industry with 29.5% of fish processing plants. The industry employed 4,327 people in this area, which is around half of the Scottish total.



	Comments	MCS rating	Fishing method
 Plaice ↔	Increased from 2011 to 2018 but has almost fallen back to 2011 catches (Scotland wide).	M	Beam, bottom
 Langoustine ↔	Peterhead and Fraserburgh harbours are the biggest shellfish ports in Europe mainly thanks to langoustine catches.	M	Trawling, creel
 Squid ↔	Often caught close to shore off the East Grampian Coast.	M	Trawling
 Whiting ↔	Numbers are increasing rapidly in the North Sea.	M	Trawling
 Cod ↓	Catches peaked in 2018 and have reduced since then. Major issues with climate change resulting in the northern movement of cod stocks.	M	Trawling
 Herring ↑	Increasing in number after a major historical decline.	M	Trawling
 Haddock ↔	Spawning stock is increasing in recent years following a long-term decline.	M	Trawling
 Handline mackerel ↔	As well as being home to the pelagic fleet the area is the main area for handlining in Scotland by local inshore boats.	M	Trawling

Key M Good choice M Needs improvement M Avoid M Mixed ↑↓ Trend

MSC Good Fish Guide rating

The ratings are taken from the Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide which aims to use scientific research to help inform people about the most sustainable options for seafood: https://www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide/

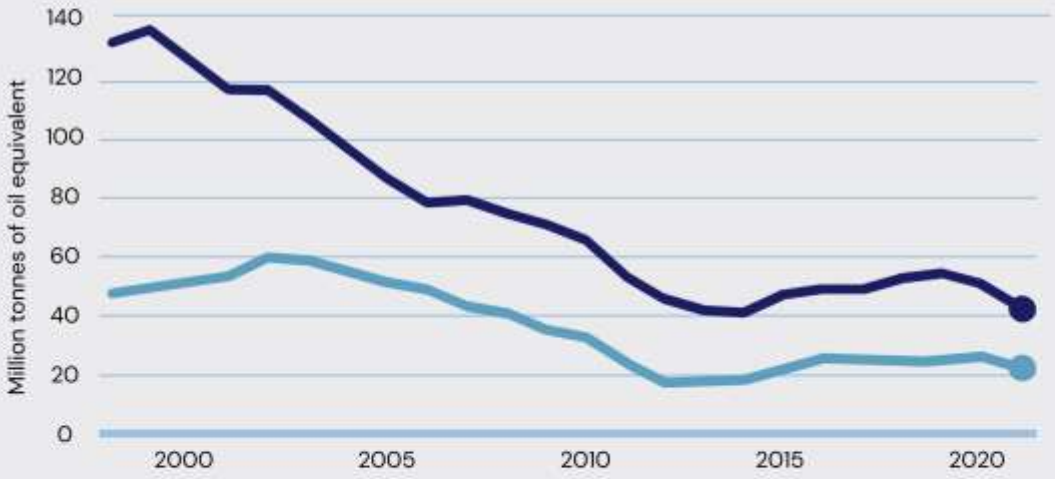
Oil and Gas

The East Grampian Coast is the key location for the oil and gas industry in the United Kingdom. Aberdeen and Peterhead serve as the hub for supporting the Scottish sector of the North Sea, with Aberdeen Airport as the key heliport for crew transfer.

The Forties pipeline which passes under the beach at Cruden Bay carries around 30% of UK oil production. The gas terminal at St Fergus is one of three main plants in the UK that process natural gas from the Scottish and Norwegian sectors. St Fergus processes around 20% of the UK's gas demand.

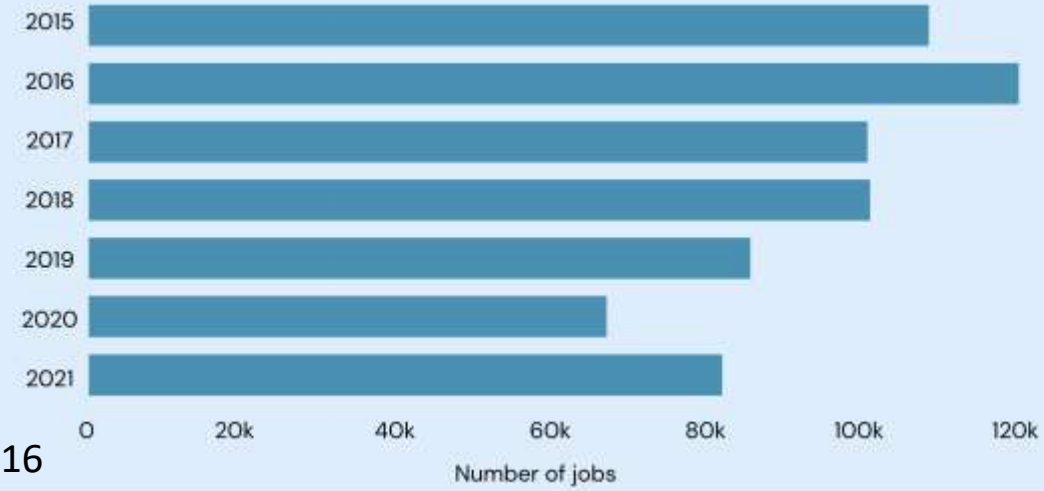
Production

Fell steadily from 1999 until 2014 when 30 new oil fields came onstream. Increased production efficiency led to an increase in production. However, production has been on the decline again between 2019 and 2023.



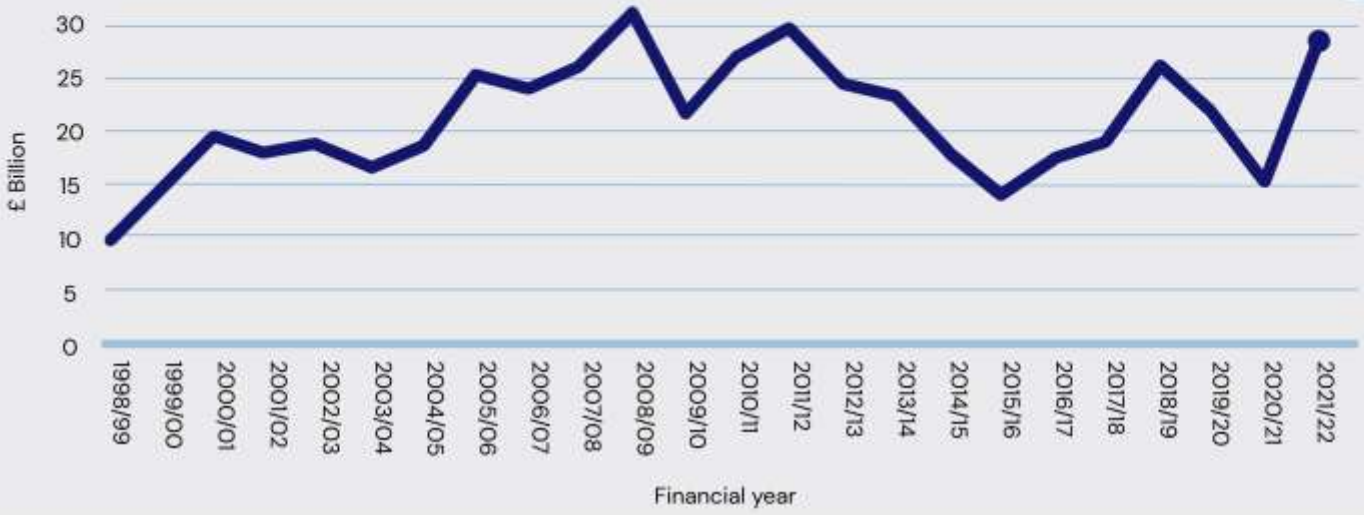
Employment

Oil and gas production has brought a large number of jobs to the East Grampian area. While we do not have figures for local employment, in 2015, 109,200 people were employed in Scotland. By 2021, our most recent numbers, this had reduced to 82,400 and it is expected that more recent statistics will show a further drop since then.



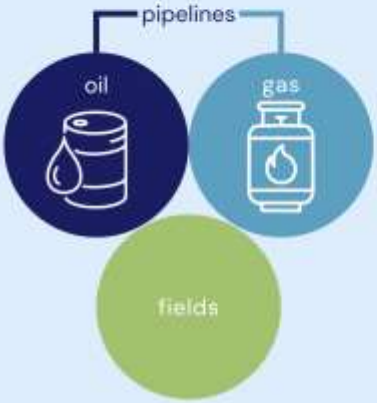
Value to the economy

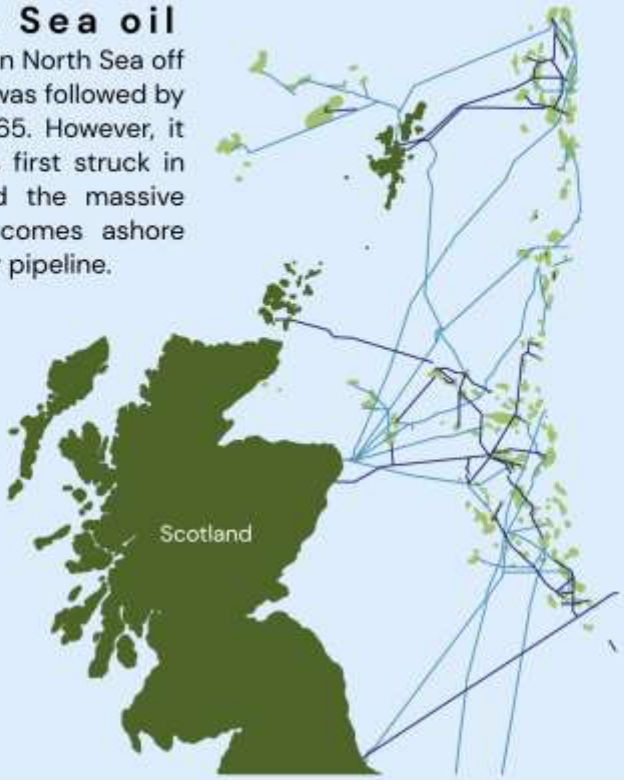
In 2021/22, revenue from sales of oil and gas hit £28billion. This is close to the all-time record set in 2009/10. This was set despite lower oil and gas production and is likely due to high energy prices set at an international level.



The history of North Sea oil

Gas was first discovered in the southern North Sea off the coast of Holland back in 1959, this was followed by the discovery in English waters in 1965. However, it would not be until 1975 when oil was first struck in Scottish waters when BP discovered the massive Forties Field. Oil from this system comes ashore under the sands at Cruden Bay, a major pipeline.



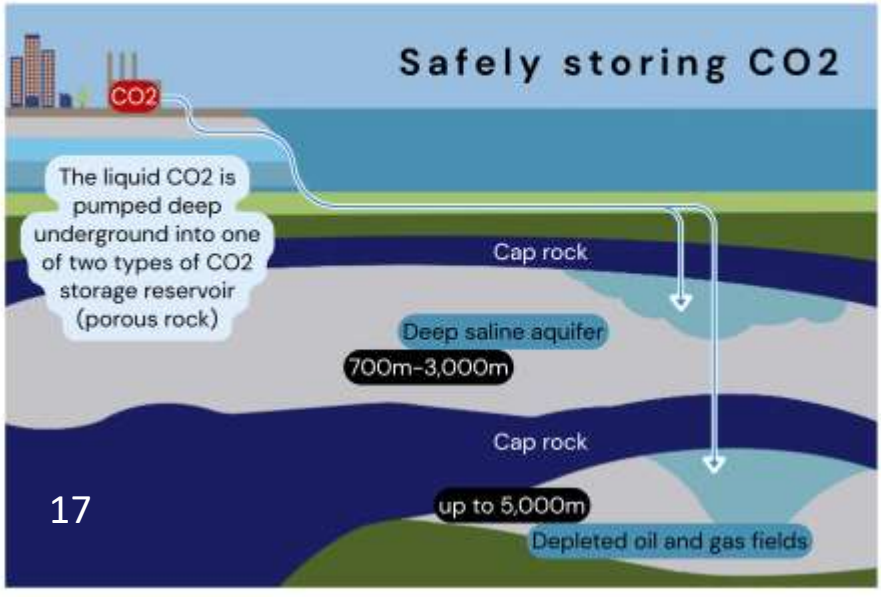


The North Sea is a now a mature oil and gas area with production reducing year on year. This has been heightened by efforts to reduce CO2 releases that affect the global climate.

The future

While the oil industry in the North Sea has undoubtably led to the release of CO2 into the atmosphere, there are ambitious plans that may mean it is also important for the removal of these greenhouse gasses.

Peterhead is currently at the forefront of investigations where the pipes that brought oil and gas to shore could also be used to pump CO2 deep underground to be stored indefinitely in the spent oil fields.

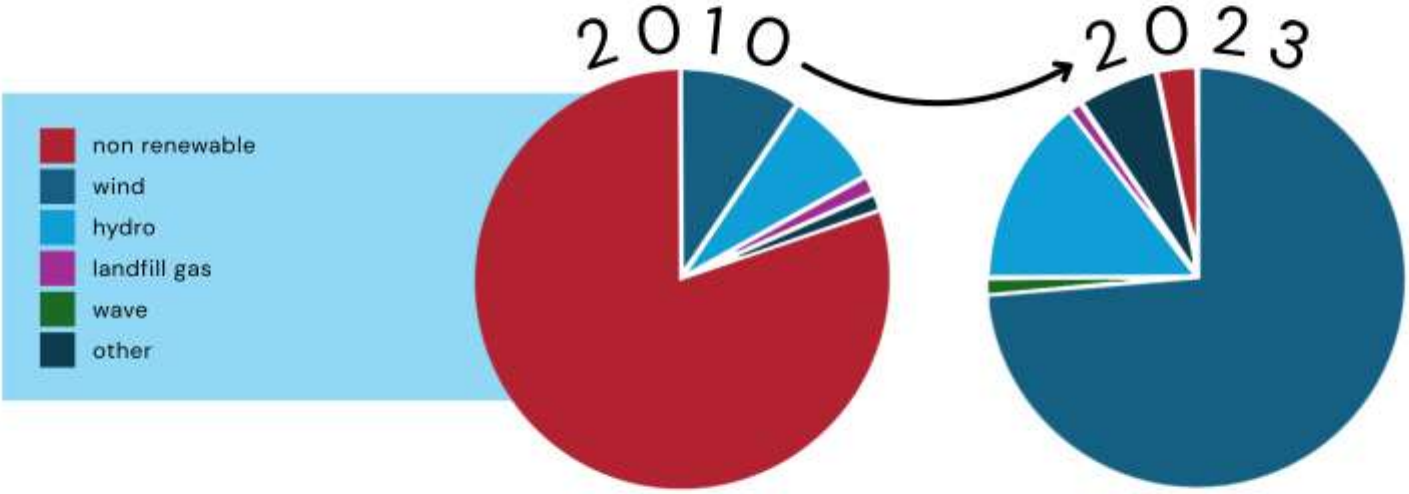


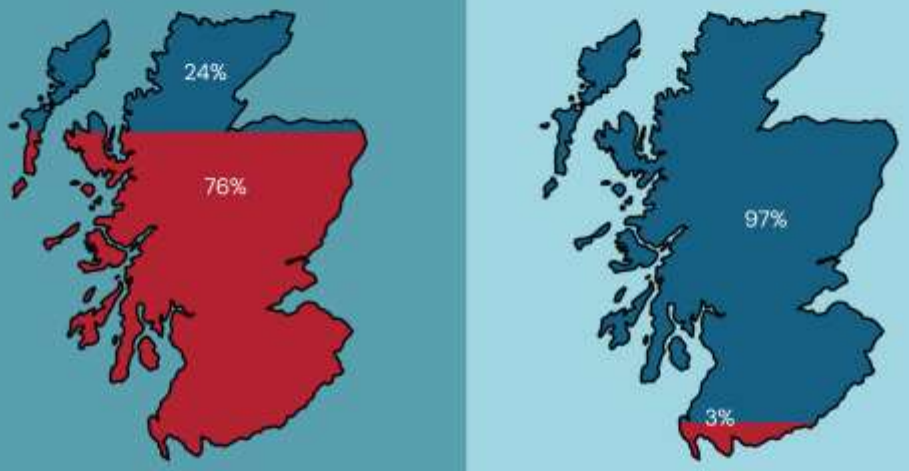
Renewable Energy

The move to renewable energy in Scotland since 2010 has been major, however in the North East of Scotland, this is not new...

Scotland's electricity by source

Since 2010, the proportions of Scotland's energy coming from fossil fuels, mainly gas, has reduced from over 80% to around 3% of electricity needs. Soon, Scotland will be producing far more electricity than it needs with extra capacity being exported. However, the need for electricity is also likely to increase as people move to electric vehicles and heat pumps replace fossil fuel powered boilers.





Scotland is now one of the world leaders in producing renewable electricity with over 97% of our electricity coming from renewable sources. This is compared to 46% for the UK as a whole and countries like the USA being down at only 22%.

It is not only energy we are exporting, plans are underway to build Europe's largest factory building wind turbines near Inverness, which is scheduled to open in 2028.

Wind in the North East

First domestic wind turbine installed (in the world) 1887.

Aberdeen Bay – 11 turbines provide 50% of domestic supply to Aberdeen City.

How much power can you get from a large wind turbine?

The largest wind turbine can produce 67,000,000kWh.

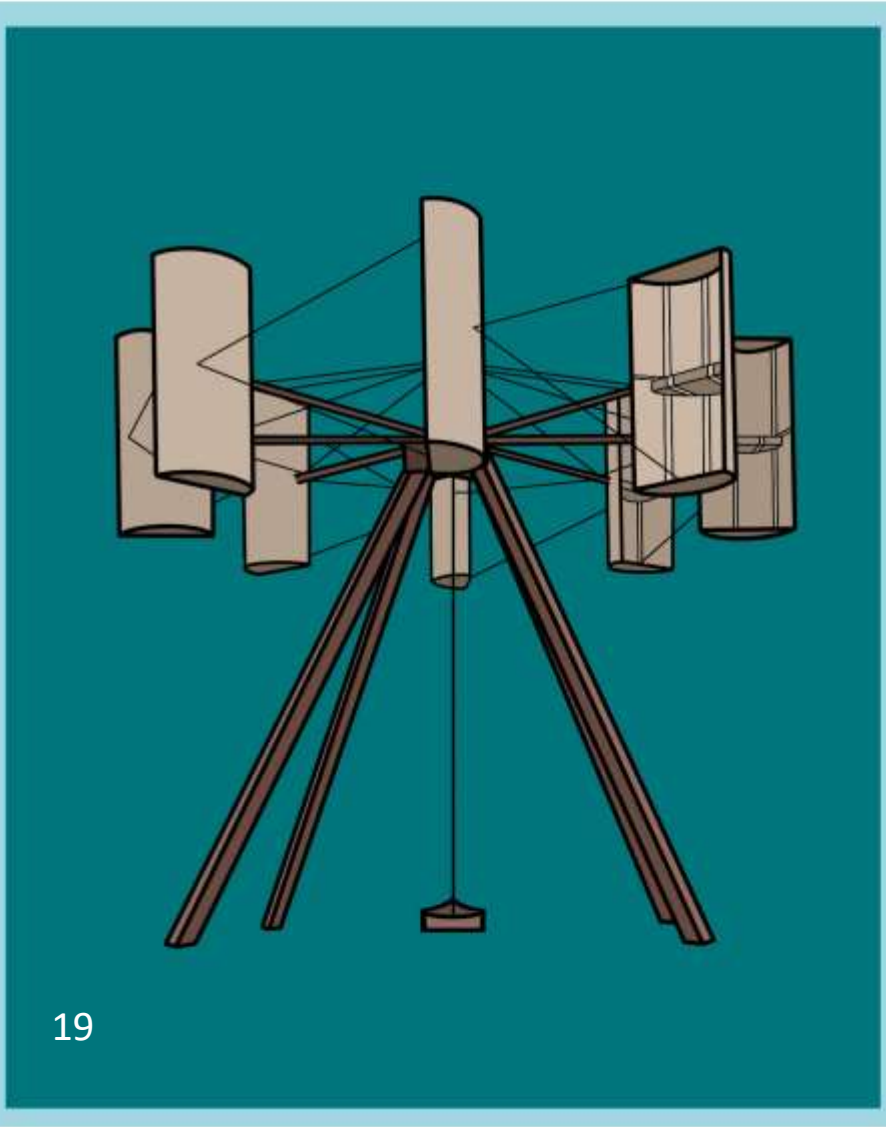
A modern 44kWh electric vehicle can travel about 4.2 miles per kWh. This means that in under one hour, a large wind turbine can produce enough power to drive an EV around the equator!

(Actual distance may vary depending on the vehicle, driving style, and conditions).

A centre for innovation

The world's first domestic wind turbine that produced electricity was installed in Marykirk in 1887 by inventor James Blyth. It produced enough power to run ten lightbulbs and a small laith. He offered to create more so the village could have street lighting but was turned down with locals stating that this was 'the work of the devil'.

The inventive spirit has not died in the area with the world's first fleet of hydrogen double decker buses now in operation in Aberdeen.



Wildlife

The East Grampian Coast has an internationally important wealth of coastal wildlife depending on its wide range of rich landscapes. From the tiny whorl nosed snail to orcas, life has found a home. Even our towns and cities provide a home for nature.

Our wildlife is changing with cold loving species retreating north and new species colonising from the south. We have also seen species returning that we lost due to hunting and loss of living space, such as the crane and the humpbacked whale.

Habitats

To have thriving and diverse wildlife we need strong, resilient habitats. These can be above or below the water line. The East Grampian Coast has a range of important landscapes for wildlife. Many of which have national and international designations.

Rocky shores

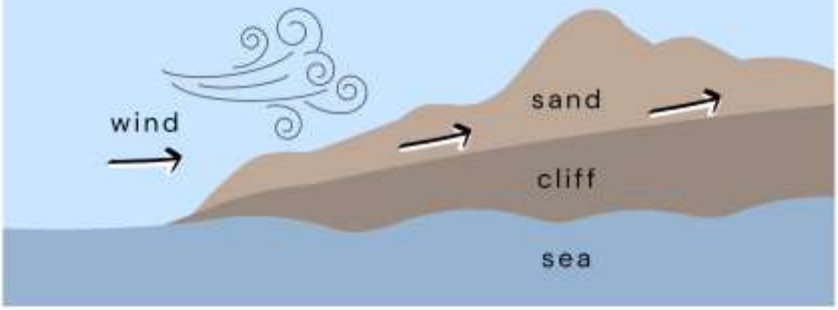
Areas where the waves crash into the rocks, such as many of our headlands like Kinnaird Head at Fraserburgh and Girdleness in Aberdeen are good examples, although around 30% of our shore is made up of this habitat. Rocky shores support a wide range of birds such as turnstones and purple sandpipers. Below the water they often support kelp and a variety of seaweed.
They are also good places for finding rockpools, where a great deal of life can be found.

Sand dunes

The East Grampian Coast is also home to some of Scotland's best sand dunes, with the area from the Donmouth to Fraserburgh including a mixture of sand dunes and cliffs.
Sand dunes are created by the wind but held together by plants, such as marram grass, and they support breeding bids such as the Eider and Terns.
Threats to sand dunes include erosion caused by visitors and development. At the time of the 2009 State of the Coast report, damage by quad bikes was a major issue in the north of the area, this has been solved through partnership working.
St Cyrus and Forvie are nationally important sand dunes. Both Forvie and the Loch of Strathbeg also have sand lochs, lakes that have been formed within the dunes.

Forvie, where sand dunes climb cliffs

Normally sand dunes are found next to the sea, however at Forvie a large slab of rock and the prevailing winds have resulted in sand dunes that sit at the top of a cliff. This is a very unusual habitat indeed.



Cliffs

The East Grampian Coast has some impressive cliffs which are very important for breeding birds, these are our Seabird Cities.
Cliffs are formed by the action of the sea cutting into the base of the cliff, eating away at the land.
This type of landscape often produces features like sea stacks, where stronger rock resists the action of the sea.
Caves are often used by seals for resting and keeping their young safe. The Bullers of Buchan is a great place to see these formations, as well as birds such as the Puffin.

Ports

While these may not look like good sites for wildlife, being far from natural, our ports and harbours are full of wildlife attracted by the sheltered waters and abundance of food. Peterhead harbour provides a large area of sheltered water that is teaming with marine life. In the winter this includes birds such as the Long-tailed Duck and species of Diver. Large amounts of seals also gather here waiting for discards from local fishermen. The Port of Aberdeen includes the entrance to the River Dee which attracts hungry dolphins that hunt salmon returning to the river to breed.

Saltmarsh

These wetlands form in coastal areas that are sheltered from waves. They are incredibly rich in wildlife and are very important for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and locking it away so it cannot add to climate change. On the East Grampian Coast, saltmarsh is rare, with small areas in the Ythan Estuary and at the Loch of Strathbeg.

Protected habitats

Protection	Why?	Where?
Site of Special Scientific Interest	A unique area that is preserved for scientific research	• The sand dunes at the Loch of Strathbeg and Forvie • Cliffs between Boddam and Collieston
Marine Protected Area	Sea areas that are important for wildlife, habitat, or history	• The waters from Rattray Head west into the Moray Firth are protected as the Southern Trench
Ramsar Site	A globally important wetland	• The Loch of Strathbeg • Ythan Estuary
Special Protections Area	An important area for birds	• About one third of our coastline
Special Area of Conservation	Protection for important habitats	• The River Dee for salmon • Many of our cliffs
National Nature Reserve	An area that is important for both wildlife and for people to enjoy nature	• Forvie • St Cyrus
Local Nature Reserve	An area important for wildlife, education, or research	• The estuary of the River Don

Summer Birds

With over 20 hours of daylight and rich feeding, the East Grampian Coast is a great location for birds to raise their young. Birds are attracted from the warmer south or into the coast from the open ocean.

New arrivals

Whilst having a negative impact on many of our bird species, the changing climate is bringing new opportunities for species of Egret to become a common sight. Indeed, Great White Egrets have now started to raise young in the area.

Improved habitat has also led one of the area's most spectacular species, the Common Crane, to return in increasing numbers.

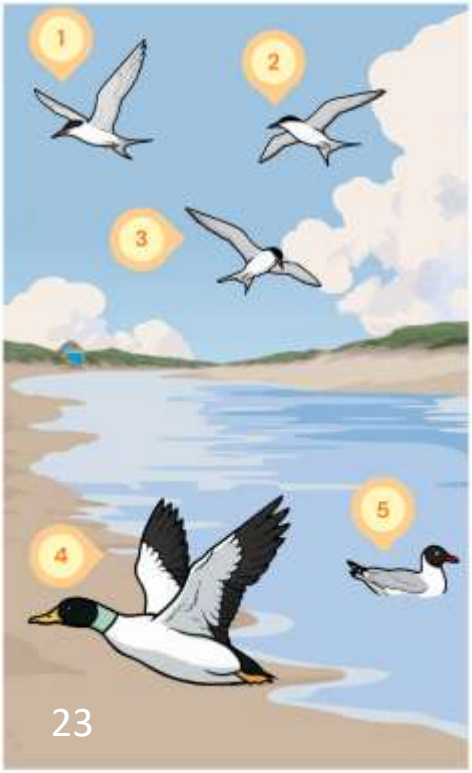
Key

feeding · climate · litter · predation · storms · disturbance · trend + status · habitat

	Comments	Numbers	% Scot pop	Threats
Herring Gull ↓	Despite being very visible, this is a rapidly declining species locally: 85% in 50 years. This could be partly due to moving away from landfill waste disposal.	6,000 nests	30%	feeding
Fulmar ↓	After a major increase in numbers from the mid 1800s, now in decline across Scotland.	4,200 nests	1.5%	feeding, litter, climate
Puffin ↓	Decreasing rapidly: 90% since 2000. These iconic birds can still be seen at Fowlsheugh and the Bullers of Buchan.	80 nests	>0.1%	feeding, storms, climate
Kittiwake ↓	Major stronghold species but numbers have dropped by 40% in 20 years.	40,000 nests	30%	feeding, climate
Guillemot ↑	Increasing south of Aberdeen but decreasing North. Numbers declining overall following a big increase between 1960-2000.	125,000 nests	12%	feeding, storms
Razorbill ↑	Global numbers increased by 200% since 1970. Increased across Scotland but by less than 10% over that period.	29,000	20%	feeding, storms
Shag ↑	Increasing locally but decreasing nationally. Badly affected by storm events.	800	5%	feeding, storms, climate

The Ythan

	Comments	Numbers	% Scot pop	Threats
1 Sandwich Tern ↕	Major decrease nationally but steady locally. In the last 15 years the population that had bred at the Loch of Strathbeg has moved to join the large colony at the Ythan.	830 nests	80%	predation, disturbance
2 Common / Arctic Tern ↓	Two species that are often recorded together as tricky to tell apart in the field. Common Terns are nationally stable with Arctic Terns decreasing. However, in this area there has been a major increase in numbers, mainly of Arctic Terns.	1,600 nests	8%	predation, climate, disturbance
3 Little Tern ↓	Small numbers and decreasing. All breeding at the Ythan Estuary.	25 nests	10%	predation, disturbance
4 Eider	Once the largest Eider breeding area in the UK, now declining rapidly but stabilising.			predation, storms, disturbance
5 Black Headed Gull ↑	This species has moved largely from the Loch of Strathbeg to the Ythan Estuary. This is probably due to the predator protection that is in place at the Forvie Tern Colony.	2,400 nests		predation, disturbance



Key bird breeding sites

1. Loch of Strathbeg
2. Longhaven cliffs
3. Bullers of Buchan
4. Forvie and the Ythan
5. Aberdeen rooftops and cliffs
6. Fowlsheugh

Bird flu

From 2021-2024, the UK experienced its worst ever outbreak of avian influenza (also known as 'avian flu' or 'bird flu'), affecting at least 78 bird species with millions of birds dead worldwide. In the East Grampian area, this had a major impact on certain birds including Kittiwakes and Tern species. The most visibly impacted species was the Gannet, found dead in large numbers. While Gannets do not breed in our area, they do feed here in abundance. The long term impacts remain to be seen in future updates.

Wintering Birds

While the East Grampian Coast is a great place for birds to raise young, many of our breeding species tend to either head out to sea for better feeding, or head south for warmer weather. At the same time, other birds head to our shores for warmer winters which have at least some daylight and unfrozen ground, as compared to Scandinavia.

Long distance migrants

Bird migration is mind blowing! Two species really stand out: Each year Arctic Terns make a journey from their breeding grounds at the Ythan Estuary in Summer, to the edge of Antarctica during our winter. Meanwhile, the Sooty Shearwater does the reverse, breeding on rocky islands in the far South Atlantic then spending the southern winter around our coast (being regularly seen from Girdleness in Aberdeen).

	Comments	Numbers	% Scot pop	Threats
Common Scoter (at Blackdog)	Highly variable. Small numbers breeding in Scotland, many migrate here for the winter.	2,000 wintering, peak in August	1.5%	
Velvet Scoter (at Blackdog)	Gradual increase until 2017, then returned to low numbers.	20 wintering, peak in August	<1%	
Oystercatcher	Spends the summer in the hills and winters in the coast. Decreasing at the Ythan Estuary but stable at Peterhead and Girdleness.			
Pink footed Goose	Increasing nationally but highly variable locally. From the East Greenland / Iceland population.			

Difficulties in assessing wintering birds

While breeding birds tend to be faithful to their chosen nesting area with some returning each year for many decades, wintering birds are only in the area for one reason – food. This can lead to major differences in numbers year on year.

Waxwings are a stunning looking bird that can brighten up any berry tree. Some years Aberdeen can host thousands, some years, none. This depends on the availability of food as they only move as far south from their high Arctic breeding areas as they must. In a good berry year, they will stay in southern Scandinavia. If it has been a bad berry year there, they will cross the North Sea, sometimes in such numbers that they, and other species that also make the crossing, quickly eat all the city's berries and have to move south to other large areas.

Similarly, Pink Footed Geese mainly use this area as a stopping off point, like an avian motorway service station, with the highest numbers being in the early autumn. If the weather is good for travelling, they will sometimes bypass the area and fly directly on to other areas without the need to refuel.

Sea Mammals

The East Grampian Coast is a great place to see sea mammals such as whales, dolphins and porpoises as well as seals and otters. Over the last 20 years, we have seen many changes with some species increasing rapidly in the area and others declining. This is largely due to warming waters and the ability of marine species to respond rapidly to changing conditions.

	Comments	Threats
 Bottlenose dolphin ⬆	This population was once known as the Moray Firth population, but in the last 30 years, they have been increasing their numbers and range. Aberdeen is now a hub and dolphins are regularly being seen as far south as Yorkshire. Estimated North Sea population is around 250.	
 Harbour porpoise ⬆	The most common species in the North Sea with over 300,000 individuals. They are generally under reported in our area being small and hard to observe. On the East Grampian Coast, conflict with bottlenose dolphins may affect both numbers and behaviour.	
 Minke whale ↔	A small whale that can be seen regularly on the East Grampian Coast. There are thought to be around 10,000 in the North Sea.	
 White beaked dolphin ⬇	Until around 2006, white beaked dolphins were the most sighted species on the East Grampian Coast. Since then, they have all but been lost to the area's inshore waters. This is likely due to warming waters as a cold-water species.	
 Risso's dolphin ⬆	Over the last 20 years, numbers of this large squid eating dolphin have increased in the area.	
 Common dolphin ⬆	Irregular but expanding with pods entering the area from the West.	
 Orca ⬆	Once a very irregular species, orcas are now seen almost regularly with pods hunting in the summer months.	
 Humpback whale ⬆	This once heavily hunted species is now returning to the area, however entanglement is a major issue.	

Aberdeen urban dolphins

Some cities have urban foxes, some urban Peregrine falcons – Aberdeen has urban dolphins.
Since the mid 1990s, the entrance to the Port of Aberdeen has been a regular feeding area for bottlenose dolphins which use the confined entrance to hunt. They are attracted by the large numbers of migratory fish that need to pass through this bottleneck to access the River Dee. Spring and early summer are the best times to see these species, with the newly opened north breakwater providing excellent opportunities.

Ocean winners and losers

In the last twenty years we have seen major changes in the whales and dolphins that use our coast. Some species are making the most of warming waters including bottlenose dolphins and common dolphins who are expanding into the area.
Climate change has also negatively impacted some species with the white beaked dolphin being the prime example. In the early 2000s this was the most regularly recorded species in the area, it is now very rarely seen.
We have also seen the return of two ocean giants. The humpback whale was hunted to local extinction, but protection has lead to an increase across the north east Atlantic with many now being seen locally. Orcas are now a regular sight in the area, the reasons for this are not known but increasing numbers of seals may be a possible reason.

	Comments	Threats
 Otter ↔	While otters are not strictly a marine mammal, they do inhabit many coastal locations, notably the Ythan and Don estuaries, and in Aberdeen Harbour. In the East Grampian area, otters are doing well, although they are generally under recorded meaning we cannot assess a long-term trend.	
 Grey seal ↑	A common sight on the East Grampian Coast with Fraserburgh, Peterhead, and Aberdeen Harbours all being regular sites. They also have haul out sites at Cairnbulg, Rattery Head, Longhaven and in sea caves south of Stonehaven. Spectacular rise in numbers at the Ythan Estuary which is now the largest haul out site in Scotland with over 5,400 individuals recorded in 2019 up from a few hundred in the mid-2000s. Peak counts have reduced with around 3,000 being a more regular peak. Breeding is now occurring at this site in low numbers but experience from elsewhere suggests this may increase.	
 Harbour seal ↓	The harbour, or common seal, is much less common than the grey seal in this area possibly due to competition from the much larger species. Numbers on the East Coast of Scotland are in steady decline.	

Key

Under the Sea

Flapper skate

Flapper skate are large, growing up to 230cm. They are found around Scotland's coast although they are better know from the west coast as well as Orkney and Shetland. However, they are present in the East Grampian Coast and there is evidence of breeding with egg cases sometimes found on East Grampian beaches, mainly during beach cleans.

These giant 'mermaid's purses' can be almost the same size as this report!

Sea slugs

The nudibranch (sea slug) is one of the most eye-catching creatures found in shallow waters around Scotland, easily recognised by its pale body marked with fine yellow lines and dots. They have distinctive yellow-tipped rhinophores and tentacles around the head, and yellow tipped gills further along the mantle on its back. In North-East Scotland, they can be surprisingly common during the spring and summer months, when warmer water and longer daylight hours encourage rapid growth of kelp. This seasonal abundance makes summer an excellent time to observe their behaviour at close range, often finding several individuals feeding side by side on the same patch of bryozoan colony, which are easily observable at low tides.

Mini beasts

Narrow-mouthed whorl snail

The most northly population of the tiny snail can be found at Garron Point by Stonehaven. They occur in large numbers but are vulnerable.
The only other local population a few miles north has been lost due to erosion of the habitat.
The only other known Scottish population is on the Solway Coast.

Boardered brown lacewing

In Britain this rare coastal species is only known in a few locations on the East Grampian Coast and one site in Edinburgh. They are around 1cm in length and like rocky shores. Insect charity Buglife are working to increase knowledge and awareness of this species.

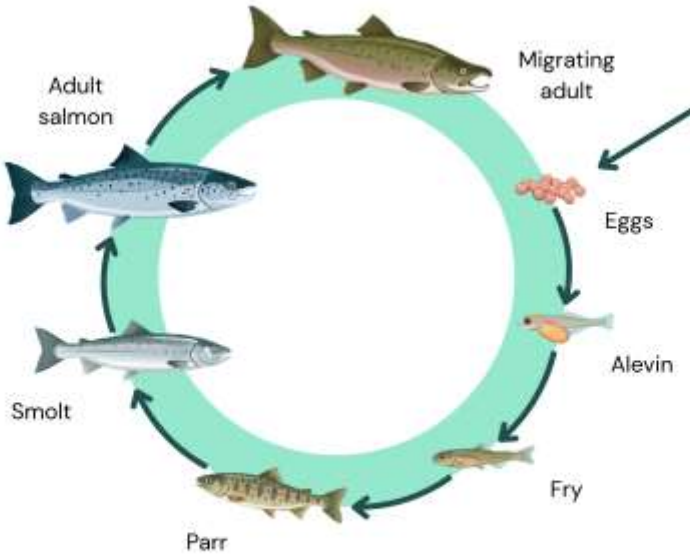
Invasive non native species (INNS)

INNS are basically wildlife in the wrong place, mainly due to human activity. Plants such as Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed are well known threats, but the coastal waters are not immune.
So far the East Grampian waters have not seen major issues with INNS, however EGCP remains vigilant using settlement panels, pieces of special plastic that wildlife can grow on, to monitor local harbours. Work is also being done to monitor the environment through the analysis of DNA found in our seawater.

River runners

Atlantic salmon

The River Dee is one of the most famous salmon rivers in Scotland with a run of spring salmon that enter the river in late winter and wait for the autumn to spawn. This is however not looking good for these magnificent fish due to many factors, but warming waters due to climate change is a big issue. To help reduce these impacts, the River Dee trust is aiming to plant 1 million trees along its banks offering shade and protecting the river from erosion. The plan is that 50% of the Dee's riverbank will be wooded.



Lifecycle of Atlantic salmon

Pink salmon

These are recent additions to our rivers, in the 1960s pink salmon were deliberately introduced into rivers in the USSR as a possible food source, they have now expanded their range and have become common in Norwegian rivers and are expanding rapidly in Scotland with the River Dee seeing the first confirmed breeding in 2017. Pink salmon have a strange lifecycle, returning to rivers once every two years.
It is unclear if Scottish rivers can sustain a breeding population due to high water temperatures, but any pink salmon catches by anglers should not be returned and should be reported to the river board.

Lampreys

Three species of lamprey live in our rivers, the brook and river lamprey are resident but the large sea lamprey is near its northern limit in our area and spends most of its life in the ocean, only returning to breed. Brook and river lamprey are up to a meter long but usually half the size of sea lamprey, also known as vampire fish, they are parasitic and feed on the blood of other fish.

Our Environment

The people, wildlife and economy of the area depend on a good environment. While we do have some major issues such as coastal litter, there is a great deal to be optimistic about. Air and water quality are improving; all our coastal bathing waters are at a good or excellent standard, and rubbish on our beaches is reducing.

Overshadowing everything is climate change, but even here we are seeing progress with the move to renewable energy. There is a great deal still to be done but we are moving in the right direction.

Beach Litter

Sadly marine litter is a big issue for our coastal communities, in 2024 EGCP's Turning the Plastic Tide delivered its biggest beach clean to date with over 25 tonnes of rubbish removed from Sandford Bay south of Peterhead. Statistics like that are both wonderful as large amounts of rubbish were removed in a single day, and terrible because the litter had to be removed in the first place.

Big wins

In 2009 when the first State of the East Grampian Coast report was published, most beach cleans included finding plastic bags. They are very harmful as they are often mistaken for jelly fish by marine mammals who eat them, which can be fatal.

Now plastic bags are a rare find on our beaches since the disposable bag tax that was introduced in 2014.

Big problems

The disposable beach BBQ is still a problem on our beaches as they are single use and difficult to dispose of as they are very hot and dirty once used.

Two items that are also an issue on our beaches are blue gloves (our record is 557 in one kilometer of beach), and oil filters from vessels. Oil filters are particularly bad as they come from maintenance that takes place in port, and are not clean when disposed of.

Measuring beach litter

At present there are three main schemes that operate in our area.

Marine Conservation Society's Beach Watch Scheme

The longest established scheme, volunteers measure every item of litter on a set area of beach 100m long.

- ✓ Very accurate
- ✓ Very well respected and has been used in evidence at Scottish and UK government
- ✓ Can be used to track trends and identify items that need tackling
- ✗ Slow when trying to clean a lot of litter from a beach
- ✗ Cannot cope with heavily littered beaches (EGCP once ran a beach clean where over 10,000 pieces of polystines were present in each square meter of beach)

EGCP's Turning the Plastic Tide

- ✓ Removes large amounts of litter
- ✗ Has a large environmental impact as catches litter early before it has a chance to break down
- ✗ Only records collected weight

Operation SCRAPbook

In 2018 the beaches of Scotland where over flown by volunteer pilots in light aircraft with photos taken and analysed. This showed that our worst beaches are in inaccessible locations at the bottom of steep cliffs. These are important as the waste is broken down over a long period of time, entering the food chain.

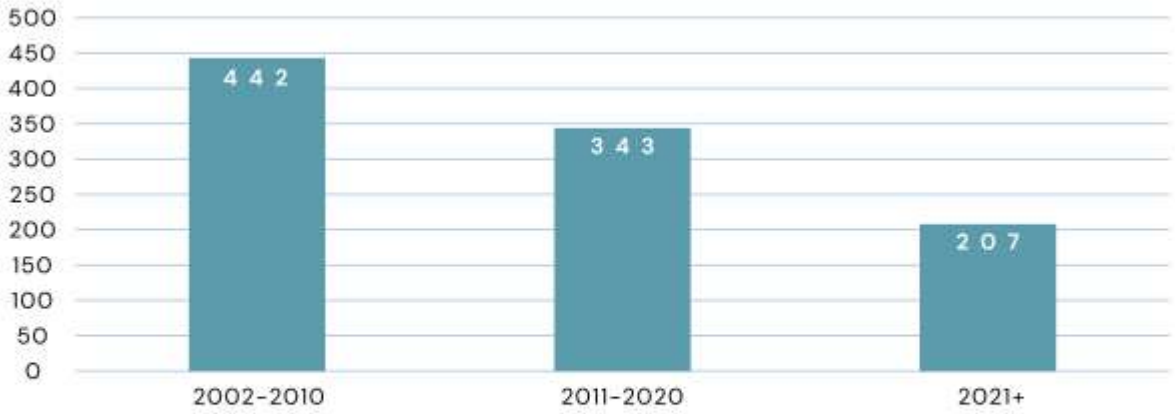
EGCP baseline assessments

On three occasions EGCP has carried out baseline assessments where 21 of the area's beaches have been walked and graded. This was done before the start of Turning the Plastic Tide in 2017, after the COVID Lock downs in 2021, and in 2024.

Aberdeen Beach clean long term results

Iain and Julia House have been running MSc beach cleans on the same part of Aberdeen Beach since 2002. These cleans have been done consistently in terms of area and method so provide very good record of beach litter trends.

Average items of litter per 100m of beach



This is a significant reduction which may have been brought about by:

- People dropping less litter
- Better sewage screening
- Efforts to reduce disposable items (plastic bags, straws, cotton bud sticks)
- More people taking part in beach cleans

The sad one - Fulmars

Unfortunately, one of the best ways of tracking the amount of marine litter is by looking at the damage it does. The Fulmar is a common seabird that breeds all along our coast. They are scavengers, using their incredible sense of smell to find food from the open sea. Sadly, they often mistake small pieces of plastic for food which stay in their stomach. When dead Fulmars are found, their stomach contents are analysed. Over the last twenty years, the amount of plastic found in Fulmars on beaches on the east coast of the UK mainland has reduced, but it is still far higher than the internationally agreed target with 51% being above the limit.

Clean Seas

The East Grampian Coast includes eight designated bathing waters. These beaches are recognised as being popular with people enjoying the water and are regularly monitored for a range of bacteria that may cause illness.

Regular testing is done during the bathing water season, 1st of June to the 15th of September. These beaches are given a classification based on the results of the previous four years of sampling combined.

Water quality for the past 5 years

Water quality scoring key

- 1 - Poor
- 2 - Sufficient
- 3 - Good
- 4 - Excellent

Award Winning Beaches

In 2025 all of the beaches shown on the map received Scotland's Beach Awards from Keep Scotland Beautiful. This recognises the beach for:

- Water quality
- Excellent beach management
- Cleanliness
- Sustainability

Balmedie has now won this award every year since EGCP made the first application in 2005. Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council now make the applications and manage the beaches.

Other beaches such as St Cyrus are not listed as designated bathing waters, so are not regularly tested, and are not eligible for the award. This does not mean that their waters are not up to a high standard.

What affects bathing water quality?

Bathing water quality looks at the quantity of two bacteria that are known to cause illness to humans. These can enter the water through sewage or animals pooing in the water. Both bacteria are killed by sunlight, because of this, the amount in the water varies drastically depending on conditions.

On a day with heavy rain, sediment is washed down from rivers and stirred up by the waves, this stops any sunlight from penetrating the water and killing the bacteria.

In addition, the high rivers will carry more poo from the flooded areas and the sewage system may have to release sewage into the sea in extreme conditions.

On a sunny calm day there is likely to be far less bacteria entering the sea from rivers and the strong sunlight can penetrate the seawater killing any that are there.

In short:

Warm calm days =
Good water quality =
Good for swimming

Cold stormy days =
Poor water quality =
Bad for swimming

Daily predictions

Because we can predict the days that are likely to have good or bad water quality, SEPA has installed electronic signs at three East Grampian beaches to give an indication of what the water quality is likely to be that day.

A great improvement, but a note of caution:
Beaches in the area have improved over recent years with all now either rating as good or excellent. Aberdeen has seen a major improvement from sufficient to excellent.

Unfortunately, this information only covers the period from the 1st of June to the 15th of September, as this used to be the main bathing water season, however people now swim all year round.

While most bathers swim on nice sunny days, surfers target days when the wind is strong so are more likely to be in the water when its quality is likely to be at its lowest.

Combined sewage overflow

In Scotland our sewage system is combined, so rainwater going down drains in the street mixes with the wastewater going from household sinks and toilets before going to the sewage works. This means that during very heavy rainfall events, if the system cannot cope, water would fill up the entire networks of storage and pipes, and dirty water would start coming up through the drains or even into your house.

To deal with this, the sewage system can bypass the treatment plant and go directly into rivers and the sea. This is almost impossible to prevent, and it should be noted that when this does happen, the sewage is massively diluted by the sheer volume of rainwater. This type of event seems to be increasing due to greater storminess caused by climate change.

Aberdeen, River Dee: major flood

Aberdeen, River Dee: summer low

While sewage released during high rainfall is not good, a worse issue is when sewage is released during an emergency at a plant due to breakdown.
This can lead to major issues as it can happen in rivers at times of low flow when the release will not be well dispersed. These types of overflows have reduced over the last four years.

What we can do

The sewage system is designed to only take human waste and toilet paper.

Sadly, people seem to think it can take anything. Items such as disposable wipes, kitchen fats, and sanitary items clog the system making breakdown more likely.

They can also end up on our beaches, creating a double issue.

News Flash

From August 2027, the Scottish Government will be banning the sale of all disposable wipes that contain plastic!

Disposable wipes

Kitchen fats

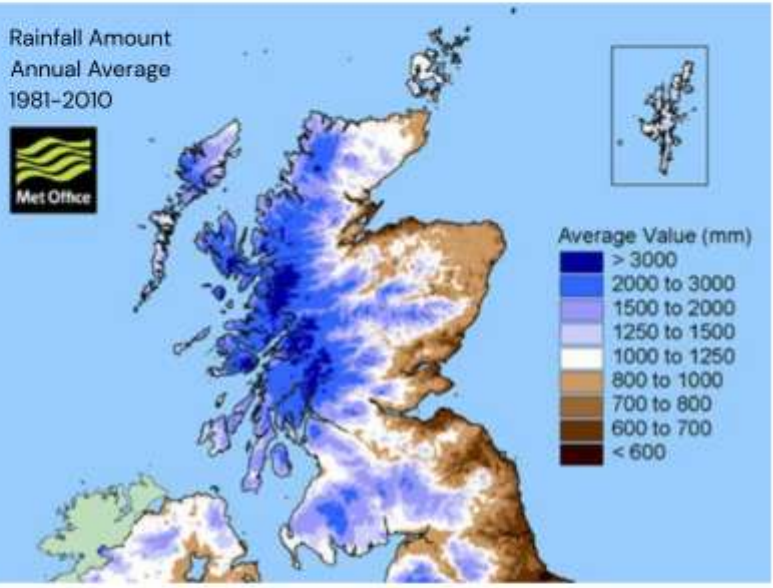
Sanitary items

Climate

The East Grampian Coast lies between a latitude of 56.77 at St Cyrus to 57.68 at Fraserburgh. This is further north than parts of Alaska, the Hudson Bay in Canada, and Moscow. But while the Huson Bay freezes over for much of winter allowing Polar Bears to hunt on the ice, Aberdeen stays generally mild all year round.
The East Grampian Coast is kept mild due to a movement of warm water that comes up from lower latitudes. This results in milder winters but also prevents the summers from being very hot.
The effect of the sea can be felt with Braemar being warmer in summer and colder in winter.

Wet?

It may feel wet but compared to the rest of the UK and Scotland, the East Grampian Coast is quite dry. Long term data recorded by the UK Met Office shows that Dyce has an average rainfall of 85.5cm per year. The UK as a whole averages 1.16m per year, and Scotland gets 1.57m per year.
The reason for the drier climate is that the East Grampian Coast sits in a rain shadow with the moist clouds tending to come from the east, looing the water as rain when they hit land. The west of Scotland averages over 1m more rain per year than Aberdeen.



A nice warm sea?

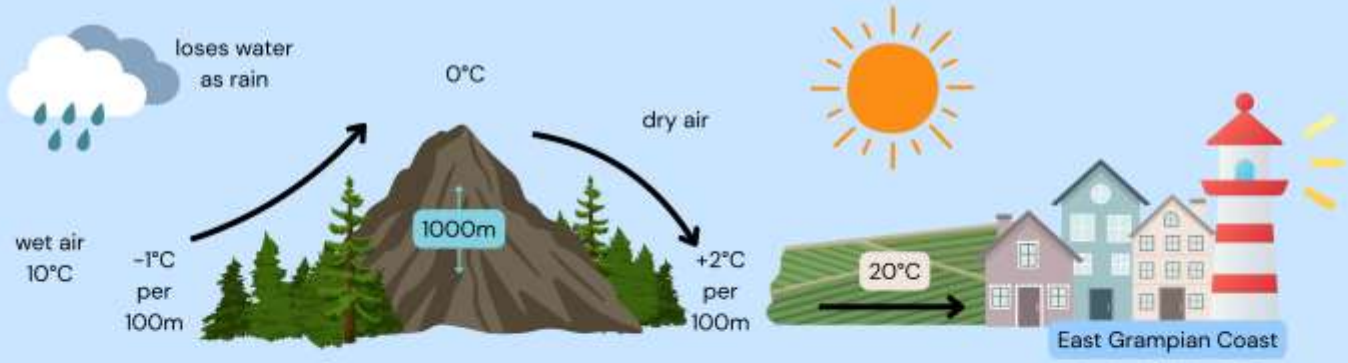
Compared to the Hudson bay, yes. Compared to the rest of Scotland, no.
The East Grampian Coast is quite far north so colder than waters further south, but is also less affected by the warm waters that move up the west coast of Scotland. This means we have some of the coldest coastal waters in Scotland. Even the Moray Firth to the north gets warmer water than we do.

Odd weather

Warm wind from the west vs cold cloud from the east.
For a few days in spring the weather forecast looks odd. Most of Britain is covered by rain and low temperatures but our area of Scotland is 10°C warmer and sunny, this is the Fohn effect.

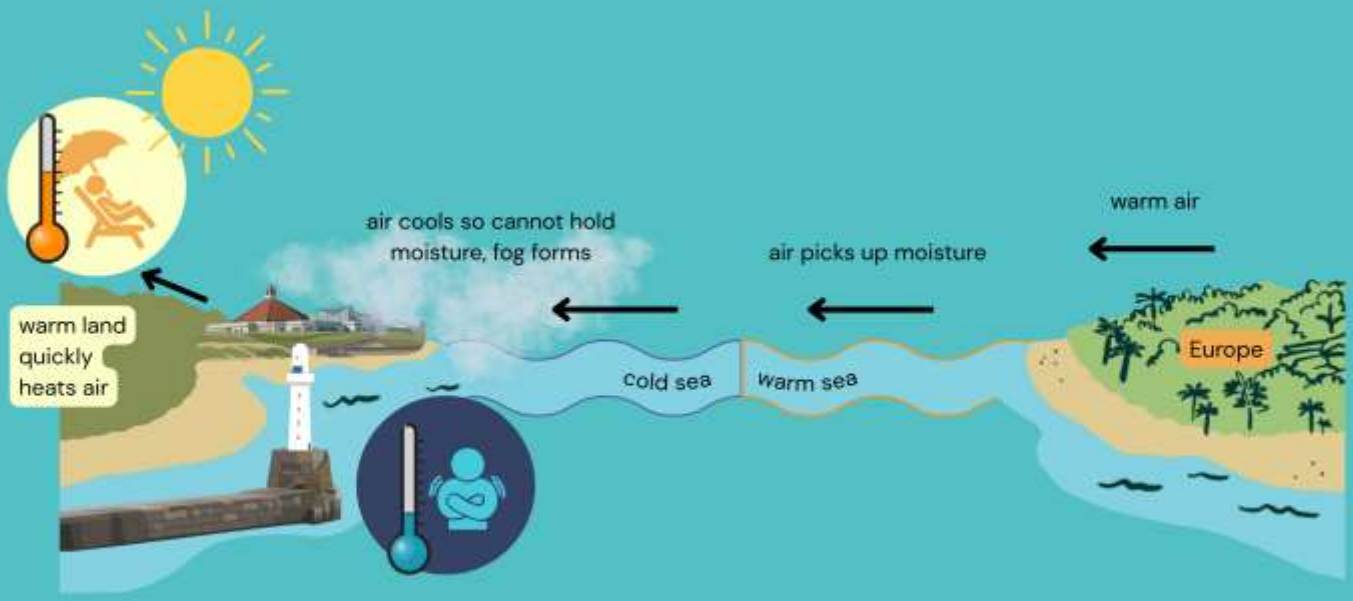
The Fohn

When wet air hits the mountains, it is pushed up, as it rises it cools and cold air cannot hold as much water so it rains. As air passes over a mountain and descends, it warms up, allowing it to hold more moisture, but much of the water has already fallen as rain. Wet air traveling up a mountain loses about 1°C for every 100m climbed, dry air going down a mountain gains almost 2°C per 100m dropped. The result: air being pushed over the 1,000m cairngorm loses 10°C on the way up and gains 20°C on the way down meaning Aberdeen gets hit by a very odd warm wind from the west.



The Haar

Sadly, the opposite is also true - the dreaded Haar. Warm air traveling east across the North Sea picks up moisture, as the eastern North Sea is warmer than our waters. As it gets closer to us it cools, cool air cannot hold water so cold fog forms and hits our coast. As it hits that land it soon warms and the fog vanishes within a few miles.
The result: the western parts of Aberdeen city are bathed in warmth and blue skies, while the beach is cold and foggy.



Changing climate

Trying to predict the effects of climate change in an area such as the East Grampian Coast is difficult, but we are seeing changes.

Temperature in Aberdeen

The average temperature in Aberdeen has risen by around 1°C from long term value of 7.98°C recorded between 1973 and 1983, to 8.98°C.
This is a major change, and one that we are expecting to see increase in coming years.

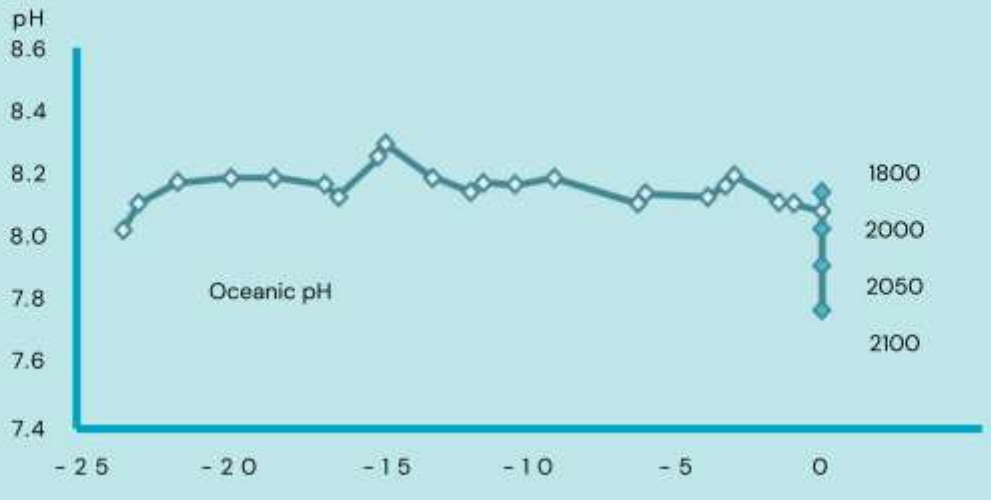
The effect on our waters

On land, higher temperatures can be slow to affect life, forests cannot simply move overnight, ecosystems are fixed but will alter over time. In the sea there are no fences, if it becomes too warm, many species swim to somewhere cooler. It is also possible that the types of whales and dolphins we see have changed. The bottlenose dolphins that we now see at Aberdeen harbour were rarely present before the mid 1990s. It is possible that before then it was a bit too cool for them, hence why they stayed in the warmer waters of the Moray Firth.

Some species are slower to move, individual Cod tend to stick to a home area, as the seas get warmer the can reproduce less so reduce in numbers. Cod living in colder areas are more successful as the water warms so the population shifts.

The main greenhouse gas, Carbon Dioxide is dissolved in vast quantities by our seas. This has reduced the effects of climate change but there may be another major problem. In the ocean, Carbon Dioxide makes the water slightly acidic. Many of the species of plankton that ocean ecosystems depend on use calcium in their shells which dissolve in acid. At present, we do not know the degree that this will affect the seas but we do know that our oceans are more acidic now than at anytime in the last 20 million years.

Ocean acidity over the past 25 million years and projected to 2100



Acronyms	
aGVA	Adjusted Gross Value Added
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
EGCP	East Grampian Coastal Partnership
EU	European Union
EV	Electric vehicle
INNS	Invasive non native species
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NORCET	Northern North Sea Cetacean Ferry Surveys
UK	United Kingdom
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Glossary	
aGVA	A measure of the economic value created by a sector or activity, after adjusting Gross Value Added (GVA) to remove the effects of taxes and subsidies on products. It shows the real contribution of an industry to the economy.
Bryozoan	A tiny aquatic animal that lives in colonies made up of many connected individuals. Bryozoans attach to hard surfaces such as rocks, shells, seaweed, and marine debris.
Deprivation	A state where individuals or communities lack the resources, opportunities, or services needed for a reasonable standard of living, such as adequate income, housing, education, healthcare, or employment.
Disposable Bag Tax	A government charge introduced in Scotland in 2014 on single-use plastic bags to reduce plastic waste.
Greenhouse gasses	Gases in the Earth's atmosphere that trap heat, helping to keep the planet warm by absorbing and emitting infrared radiation
Haul out site	a specific coastal area—such as beaches, rocks, or sandbanks—where seals come ashore to rest, moult, and breed.
Herring boom	A period in the 19th and early 20th centuries when the herring fishing industry grew massively and became hugely important economically and socially
Highwater Mark	The highest point on the shore that the sea reaches during the tide.
Inshore waters	Areas of the sea close to the coast, usually within a few miles of the shoreline, where the water is relatively shallow and often used by smaller fishing vessels and coastal activities.
Lathe	A machine tool used to shape, cut, or finish materials, usually metal, wood, or plastic, by rotating the workpiece against a cutting tool.
Pelagic	Anything related to the open ocean, away from the coast and the sea floor, in terms of fisheries, pelagic species live in the open water rather than on the seabed or the shore
Quayside	The area alongside a quay, which is a platform or dock built along the edge of a river, harbour, or canal where ships load and unload cargo or passengers
Renewable energy	Energy that comes from natural sources that are naturally replenished, meaning they won't run out over human timescales. These sources are sustainable and typically have a lower environmental impact than fossil fuels
Rhinophores	Sensory organs found on the heads of sea slugs (nudibranchs). They are usually shaped like small horns or antennae and help the animal detect chemicals in the water, allowing it to find food, mates, and navigate its surroundings.
Scavengers	Animals or organisms that feed on dead animals, dead plant material, or refuse
Spawn	The eggs released by fish, amphibians, or other aquatic animals during reproduction

Organisation	Role	Website
Buglife	Buglife is a conservation charity focused on protecting invertebrates and their habitats through conservation projects, research, and advocacy.	https://www.buglife.org.uk
Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance	The Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance is a fishing-focused and community-based organisation established in 2017 to provide a collective voice for Scotland's inshore fishing sector and the coastal communities that depend on it.	https://www.cifascotland.org/
Council Rangers	Council Rangers are local authority rangers who manage parks, nature reserves, and coastal areas while educating the public and protecting wildlife and habitats.	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parks-and-outdoors/ranger-service
East Grampian Coastal Partnership (EGCP)	The East Grampian Coastal Partnership is a not-for-profit company established to support sustainable coastal and marine management for the East Grampian coastline. EGCP brings together individuals, community organisations, local authorities, industry, and NGOs to act on coastal issues.	http://www.egcp.org.uk
Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)	JNCC is a public body that provides scientific advice on nature conservation and coordinates conservation work across the UK and internationally.	https://jncc.gov.uk
Mammel Society	The Mammal Society is a conservation charity that conducts research, surveys and education to protect wild mammals in the UK.	https://www.mammal.org.uk
Marine Conservation Society (MCS)	The Marine Conservation Society is one of the UK's leading marine environmental charities dedicated to protecting and restoring the health of the ocean, seas, shores, and marine wildlife.	https://www.mcsuk.org/
Marine Directorate	A directorate of the Scottish Government responsible for the management of Scotland's seas, including marine planning, fisheries regulation, marine licensing, and scientific research.	https://www.gov.scot/marine
Marine Mammal Medics	British Divers Marine Life Rescue is the UK's specialist charity dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and conservation of marine mammals. The Marine Mammal Medics are trained volunteer responders who provide assistance to seals, dolphins, porpoises, whales, and other marine mammals in distress around the UK coastline.	https://bdmlr.org.uk/
National Trust for Scotland	The National Trust for Scotland is a conservation charity that protects and manages Scotland's historic buildings, landscapes, and natural heritage for public benefit.	https://www.nts.org.uk
NatureScot	NatureScot is Scotland's national nature agency that advises government and works to protect, restore, and promote Scotland's natural heritage and biodiversity.	https://www.nature.scot
North & East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group	The North & East Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group is one of Scotland's regional fisheries advisory groups designed to support sustainable management of inshore fisheries, within the 0–12 nautical mile zone of Scottish waters.	https://rifg.scot/
North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership	The North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership is a collaborative, non-profit partnership focused on protecting and promoting biodiversity across north-east Scotland	https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/
North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG)	NESFLAG is a cross-sector partnership focused on supporting the sustainable development of coastal and fishing communities in North East Scotland. It was established by Aberdeenshire Council and includes representatives from local fishing sectors, community organisations, private businesses and the public sector.	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/business/business-support/funding/cccf/
Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)	The RNLI's primary role is to provide lifesaving services and promote water safety. As a charitable organisation independent of government funding, it operates lifeboats and lifeguard units, engages in public education on water safety, and works to prevent drowning through awareness and training.	https://www.rnli.org/
RSPB Aberdeen & District Local Group	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Aberdeen & District Local Group is a volunteer-led branch of the RSBP, dedicated to promoting birdwatching, appreciation of nature, and conservation in the Aberdeen area.	https://group.rspb.org.uk/aberdeen/
Scottish Environment Link	The Scottish Environment Link is a network of environmental organisations that campaign and collaborate to influence policy and protect Scotland's environment and wildlife.	https://www.scotlink.org
Scottish Wildlife Trust – Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Local Group	The Scottish Wildlife Trust – Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Local Group is a branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scotland's leading independent wildlife conservation charity. The group's role is to champion wildlife and wild places across the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire region by connecting people with nature, raising awareness , and supporting conservation.	https://www.swtaberdeen.org.uk/
Seawatch Foundation	The Seawatch Foundation is a UK based research charity that monitors and studies whales, dolphins and porpoises to improve their conservation and protection.	https://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk
Surfers Against Sewage (marine conservation charity)	Surfers Against Sewage exists to inspire, unite and support people in protecting the ocean and the natural environments connected to it.	https://www.sas.org.uk/
Whale and Dolphin Conservation	Whale and Dolphin Conservation is an international charity dedicated to protecting whales and dolphins through research, conservation campaigns, and public education.	https://uk.whales.org

About EGCP

Established in 2005, the East Grampian Coastal Partnership covers the area from Kinnaird Head, Fraserburgh and the mouth of the River North Esk, by St Cyrus.

It works to improve our coastline and promote its sustainable development through planning, research, education and delivering practical improvement.

Discover more about our coast

EGCP also produces a range of four maps that give a huge amount of information about our coast. These include history, wildlife walks and much more.

You can also join us for whale and dolphin watches and we can come to your school to share our knowledge.

How to help

The EGCP Turning the Plastic Tide Project holds beach cleans up and down the coast and has already removed over 140 tonnes of rubbish from our beaches, Get in touch and we can help you or your group to get involved.

Keep in touch

EGCP produced four eNewsletters a year. Sign up on our website if you wish to be kept in formed. You can also find links to our social media on the site.

www.egcp.scot

www.stateofthecoast.scot

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