



## What is the WDCS Shorewatch Programme?

**WDCS Shorewatch is a network of trained volunteers monitoring the presence and absence of whales and dolphins at selected sites around the Scottish coastline, in order to raise awareness and capture vital data crucial to the long term future of these amazing animals.**

### What does this mean?

**Trained volunteers** – Shorewatch volunteers attend a half-day training course in which they learn the basics of cetacean-ID and how to do a 10-minute WDCS Shorewatch. This means that all watches are carried out in the same way and that we can compare watches between observers.

**Presence and absence** - WDCS Shorewatch is different than simply reporting that a whale or dolphin has been seen. We are also recording the amount of watches that observers complete - even when a whale or dolphin was not sighted - so that we know whether animals were sighted 1 in 10 times or 1 in 100 times. We can then compare this sighting rate between seasons and years.

**Selected sites** – Shorewatch volunteers will share equipment and complete watches from selected sites so that we can build up effort in these locations rather than spread along the coast. This enables us to compare sighting rates between locations and identify areas that are regularly used by whales and dolphins which might need protection. We can also see if these 'hot spots' change over time.

**Raise awareness** – Shorewatch volunteers are given training so that they are comfortable and confident answering questions about their watches and whales and dolphins. Many visitors and even local people are unaware that they can see these amazing animals in Scotland and that we must protect their marine environment. Shorewatch volunteers become ambassadors for the whales and dolphins.

**Long term future** – WDCS will use the data that you collect to better understand the movements of coastal species and inform decision makers. It is vital to understand which areas might be key habitat for whales and dolphins and monitor how they use these areas over time. Such data will also be valuable towards informing planning decisions in future developments.

WDCS Head of Scottish Policy, Sarah Dolman, commented on the need for the Shorewatch Programme saying, *"It is vital to understand which areas might be key habitat for these amazing animals. We basically need to have eyes on the sea around the entire Scottish coastline; this is why community participation is so important to the long term management of marine species and their homes."*

---

The WDCS Shorewatch Programme is made possible through the generous support of Scottish Natural Heritage



Scottish Natural Heritage  
All of nature for all of Scotland

More information: [www.wdcs.org/shorewatch](http://www.wdcs.org/shorewatch); [shorewatch@wdcs.org](mailto:shorewatch@wdcs.org); 01343 820 339

WDCS is a registered charity, No. 1014705. WDCS Scotland is a registered charity, No. SCO40231

