

Marine Wildlife

KA

I really love the North Sea actually, we've got so many different species that a lot of people don't actually even know that we've got. I still find species now that I would have never thought that we would even get here.

MV

Yes, obviously 180 degrees of Scarborough is open sea. So we do get harbour porpoises coming through. If you sit on the harbour wall almost any time of year sometimes you can see the fin shape of the harbour porpoises' back dipping in and out of the sea as they catch fish.

EB

We went on a boat.

LB

Wet Wheels Yeah.

EB

Yes, it was with Whish. It goes really really fast. And you can see, like, whales and dolphins.

LB

Didn't see a whale though.

EB

What did we see?

LB

Yeah, we saw a dolphin.

JN

I didn't know we got dolphins here.

LB

Nowadays we do, didn't used to but recently we have and whales, yeah.

SC

Previously in the last couple of years, maybe once, twice a year, dolphins have come past. I think they sort of, almost like a summer jolly, they come down from the Moray Firth, go as far as Bridlington and then head back up. But the last couple years they've been hanging around all up and down this coast. So it's been beautiful.

TR

People don't believe that the dolphins are in the North Sea but they are. When we used to be further off-shore in trawlers, they used to swim along with us, and porpoise you see a lot, porpoise close in shore. Seals. Seals are not really a fisherman's friend, when I fished with my Dad with the Salmon nets we used to catch Sea Trout and Salmon, but the seals used to eat more of them than what we managed to get out of the nets.

SC

Seals often come and check you out. If you're surfing, some places a head will pop up about 20 meters away and then it'll disappear and it'll appear somewhere else, you know it's been sniffing around your feet while you've sat on your surfboard checking you out.

MN

I was diving off Ravenscar, turned around and there's a seal pup sat on a rock right behind me. And he just wasn't scared at all he was looking at us, around us and swam off. So we swam a bit further into shore. And these seal pups were just all around us really interacting. This pup, it looks right at me and sort of pulls up to me slowly. Then with the snout he just nudges my mask. And I've never seen anything that close before.

MV

We get Cormorants floating around diving down for the fish. We get Herring Gulls and we get Kittiwakes flying around through the town, Oyster Catchers and Sanderlings in the winter.

EB

There's a lot of Seagulls as well.

LB

Far too many Seagulls.

BL

If you went to somewhere like Flamborough Cliffs, you'd see a huge colony of breeding birds in the springtime. And it is the most wonderful spectacle. It's a real assault on the senses. Because you can hear those birds, you can definitely smell them as you walk towards the cliffs. And of course you can see them just, you know, whirling around in front of you everywhere.

TR

When the Herrings driftnet fishing was just a line of netting on the surface, where Herrings come up into the dark, you've got millions of Herrings all battling. It's just like rain on the moonlit night. It's awesome. And then as daylight comes, we would watch the Herring mats go down to the bottom and we would shoot our trawls, and tow through them and hopefully catch the Cod which was feeding on the Herrings as it hit the bottom.

BL

I think most people if they were to think about diving in the North Sea would instantly think that it would be cold and very dark and there wouldn't be a lot to see. But actually, there's a huge amount to see down there. The life that you encounter is really quite incredible. So from very small animals things like Nudibranchs, which is a type of sea slug, to Starfish to Crabs and Lobsters to bigger animals. Things like all sorts of fish species, of course.

MN

I've seen Octopus off this coast before, not very often, think you'd be better off seeing them at night.

WC

I always enjoy going after the seaweed farm and we see the Seals, the Dolphins, occasional Whale, lots of bird life. It's fantastic to be out there with them and actually in their environment and watch what they do.

KA

But I think sometimes when you're so busy, you don't find time to really sit and enjoy nature. So I volunteer for the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. It's just called 'the Sea Watchers'.

BL

In working with members of the public and creating this network of citizen scientists, we've got this network of people that are collecting data for us, but you know, also really care passionately about their natural environment.

RF

The big charismatic species that we see off the Yorkshire coast, they're all feeding on fish, which themselves are supported by the Plankton. So we've got evidence in front of us of a very active living food chain. The challenge to the scientists is to understand what the important elements are and where the risks might be in the future. For example, if the temperature changes.