

Skomer Island 2026 - Code of Conduct For Trip Leaders

This Code of Conduct relates to any trip leaders leading a day trip on Skomer Island in 2026. However, it also contains useful do's and don'ts for all our day visitors. It is designed to help keep you, our wildlife and our staff safe whilst on the island.

It is your responsibility to ensure those in your group are familiar with this document.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Code of Conduct please don't hesitate to contact the Skomer Visitor Officer, on 07530796150, prior to your visit.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

The Skomer Team

Day Visitor Code of Conduct

- Please advise your group to bring sealed bags to adhere to our biosecurity regulations.
Any unsealed bags will not be permitted to land on Skomer.
- All groups must listen to the introduction talk given by WTSWW staff. These talks contain important safety information specific to the day, as well as the time of departing boats.
- Return boat times are allocated and fixed. Please make sure you group is back at the landing at least 15 minutes before departure of your allocated boat.
- The guide/group leader should remain with the group at all times during the visit, in order to ensure the behaviour of their group is maintained throughout.
- Please obey the instructions of island staff and volunteers.
- All members of your group must stay on the paths at all times.
- Please stick to the public paths; research paths and paths cordoned off are not to be used.
- All bags and equipment need to be kept on the paths at all times. This includes tripod legs and walking poles.
- Do not obstruct wildlife or other visitors, be respectful to other island users.

- Limit your time spent in one place, especially the Wick and High Cliff, in order to make space for other visitors and the wildlife.
- It is your responsibility to ensure the health and safety of your group, including making sure cliff edges are not approached and care is taken on uneven, slippery and steep paths.
- Pop up hides, trolley carts, and similar are NOT allowed to be used on the island.
- Please make sure that your group takes all rubbish home, including cigarette butts. In dry conditions extra care must be taken with cigarettes to prevent fire.
- Pursuits which exceed normal day visitor activities e.g., bug hunting, tape-luring, collecting of plants etc. must be agreed to by the Warden/Visitor Officer in advance.
- We ask that the group leader be easily identifiable by our staff and volunteers at all times. This could be via branded clothing, lanyard, sticker, etc.
- In case of emergency, please ensure your group follow instructions given by WTSWW staff.

Photography Code of Conduct

Please remember that the welfare of the subject is more important than getting the photo. Our seabirds are at their most vulnerable when they are breeding, and people can cause unnecessary stress at an important time in their life cycle. Here are a few key points to remember:

- Always photograph animals from a safe and respectful distance.
- If an animal shows any sign of stress, move further back down the path or leave altogether.
- Never try to force an animal to do something. Remember that the impact of many people is cumulative: you might be the 100th person that day that a Puffin has to avoid while it is trying to feed or care for its young.
- Never block access to burrows or nests with bags, tripods or yourself.
- Treat the habitat with the same regard that you have for the animals themselves.
- Limit your time spent in one place, especially the Wick, in order to make space for other visitors and the wildlife.
- Overnight guests are asked to avoid busy areas like the Wick during day visitor hours. After day visitor hours there is still a strict policy of not staying in one place for more than 30 minutes. This allows birds, including our Oystercatchers and Puffins to attend their nests.
- The use of drones is strictly prohibited without the appropriate licence from NRW.
- **Do not touch or pick up any seabirds.**

Kayaking / Boating Code of Conduct

In a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the disturbance of wildlife is a criminal offence, furthermore all species of bird are protected from killing or disturbance while nesting. The Wildlife and Countryside Act prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places.

- Keep at least 50m clear from the cliffs around Skomer during the seabird breeding period (April–August).
- Keep at least 100m clear from seal haul-outs (e.g. on Rye Rocks, Garland Stone) during the entire year and beaches and caves during the seal pupping period (August–December).
- Keep an eye on the wildlife at all times. If you notice stress behaviour (seabirds: bobbing heads, flying off ledges. Seals: lifting of heads, bulging eyes, shuffling) retreat immediately.
- Respect No Access Zones, see Pembrokeshire Marine Code (<http://www.pembrokeshiremarinecode.org.uk/>).
- No flash photography.
- Do not approach rafting birds. If moving through a raft is unavoidable reduce speed to a minimum.
- Move on after 10 minutes watching.
- Keep noise and movement on the boat to a minimum when watching or passing wildlife.
- We ask that the group leader be easily identifiable by our staff and volunteers at all times. This could be via branded clothing, lanyard, sticker, etc.