

Skomer Island Hostel Welcome Talk 2026

Upon arrival

Welcome to Skomer Island! Who has been to the island before? We'll do most of your hostel induction at the Farm, but all I need you to be aware of here is our main rule:

Stay on the path - We have 2 species of breeding seabird on Skomer that burrow underground. The first is the Atlantic Puffin (we had 43,626 in 2025). We also have around 350,000 breeding pairs of Manx Shearwaters. As there are so many birds, their burrows are everywhere. Our golden rule here is to stick to the path at all times – that's bags, children, tripods, everything.

I'll pack your luggage now and meet you at the Farm courtyard in the centre of the island so follow the main path up.

In the courtyard

The fire assembly point is the sundial in the middle of the courtyard.

The building behind the dumper truck is the hostel. In the corner is the visitor centre, and the small outbuilding next to this is the first aid room. The first aid kit and defibrillator are both kept here. The big glass doors are staff accommodation. Please ring one of the phone numbers on the door if you need help or open the door in an emergency. Our weekly volunteers live in the block next to them.

The old farmhouse was lived in until 1950. It saw a period of extensive livestock farming on the island. The buildings have now been repurposed for our use. The ruin contains information about the history of the island.

Our day visitor compost toilets are on the other end of the hostel building – you are welcome to use these.

If we go in the right-hand door of the three hostel doors, there is a boot room for boots and coats. Let's go in there and then head down to the lounge at the far left-hand end of the building.

In the hostel lounge

Lounge – please feel free to use the stove. There are postcards and guidebooks for sale in here and a range of books to browse. The blackboard is updated with recent sightings and your check-out and departure time. Please put your luggage where the dumper is by the check-out time written on this board (usually 8am).

Kitchen – the cupboards should contain all crockery you need. The cupboards are named for each bedroom so please use your assigned cupboard. The black bins in the corner are also labelled with the names of the rooms. Please use these during your stay and take your rubbish home at the end. There is a shared fridge and two ovens.

Bedrooms – There are 5 rooms – Curlew and Puffin downstairs and Chough, Guillemot and Shearwater upstairs. I have a written list of who has which room so please let me know if you need this. The keys are in the doors, except the Shearwater dorm room, where the 5 keys are on hooks inside. There is bedding on the beds – please put yours over the top or use a sleeping bag.

Bathrooms – There are two bathrooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. Please also feel free to use the compost toilets outside.

Other points

- **At night** – Please sign out on the whiteboard outside the hostel lounge when going out at night for fire safety. There's lots to see, in particular the Manx Shearwaters. These birds fly at night to avoid predation by the gulls. Their broad wings are incredible for flying but clumsy on land. We ask you to use red light when looking at the Shearwaters as they are stunned by white light. The best place to see them is down the track we walked up, as soon as it's fully dark. At night, there's also Glow Worms, Skomer Voles and lots of Common Frogs and Common Toads to see too, so watch where you put your feet.

- **Walk anti-clockwise** – We ask our day visitors to explore the island in an anti-clockwise direction (by heading to the Farm first and heading north, keeping the sea on their right.) We ask our hostel guests to also stick to this whilst there are day visitors on island. Please note, the paths back to the Farm from the west, east and south are always two-way.

- **Rubbish bins** – There are no bins on Skomer so please take all your rubbish home with you.

- **For sale** – We have water and guides for sale and binoculars for hire at the sales point. You can also find guidebooks in the hostel too.

Wildlife and points of interest

Please check the sightings board in the lounge for information on wildlife that's around.

- As you head up from the sales point, you will see the Harold Stone on your right. This is a 5000-year-old standing stone. It is the oldest evidence of civilisation on the island.
- The fields on the way to the Farm are a good spot for waders – in 2025 we had Curlew and Oystercatcher breeding here.
- West of the Farm, there's a hide looking out over North Pond which is a good spot for waders, ducks and geese.
- Heading into North Valley, you'll head into North Valley Crossing, a great spot to birdwatch. Look out for Short-Eared Owls here (we had 11 pairs in 2025).
- Up at the Garland Stone, look out for Grey Seals hauled out on the rocks (particularly in August/September). On the west coast, you may see Harbour Porpoises and Common Dolphins too.
- Bull Hole is a good spot for watching Guillemots and Razorbills (April-July).
- Skomer Head is a good lunch spot. You can see our surrounding islands from here. These are Ramsey Island to the north, Grassholm to the west (with thousands of Gannets) and Skokholm Island to the south. Look out for Chough at Skomer Head (we had 9 breeding pairs in 2025).
- The Wick is a dramatic sea cliff and a great spot for Puffins (May-July). Please don't stop here too long as the paths get very busy – it'll be quieter once day visitors have left. It's also good for Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Guillemots and Razorbills.
- South Plateau is a great place to watch our three protected gull species. These are Herring Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls.
- The Wick was a good place in 2025 to see Peregrines - one of our three pairs bred here. Other birds of prey include Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Common Buzzard, Merlin and Short-Eared Owl.
- Moorey Mere is the hide to the south – it's a good place to birdwatch and see waders and Moorhens on the pond.

Some notable sightings (please see the board for up-to-date sightings)

April	May-June	July-August	September
Spring migration – look out for migrant species, for example Ospreys. Puffins will only be present for some days this month as they prepare to breed.	Puffins will have settled in their burrows to incubate their eggs. Guillemots, Razorbills, Fulmars and Kittiwakes are all on nests too. Look out for breeding birds including Stonechat, Oystercatcher, Peregrine, Chough and Raven. Our Manx Shearwaters will be on their eggs.	Puffins will be bringing in Sand Eels for their chicks in July and will be gone by August. In August, Grey Seals start pupping on the beaches. Cetacean sightings are also particularly good and the last few Fulmars will be fledging. Manx Shearwater chicks will be hatching now.	In 2025, we had just under 250 seal pups born on Skomer with most of them born in September. You can see them most readily from the sales point or by looking down at the beaches from Captain Kites. Also look out for Manx Shearwater chicks!

We hope you have a great time on Skomer. Diolch!