

Bass Rock: Safety Reminders

This document contains important information regarding your upcoming trip to Bass Rock.

Please read it carefully and contact the Scottish Seabird Centre boat office if you have any concerns about the risks or requirements included.

Boarding the boat and landing on the island

- You will be traveling to the island using a boat operated by an experienced skipper. This boat is not suitable for anyone who has back injuries or sensitivities, or for anyone who is pregnant.
- You will be given a lifejacket by the boat guide and instructed on how to use it in an emergency. If you don't understand any of the instructions, please ask the boat guide to clarify before proceeding.
- It's essential that you thoroughly check any bags you bring with you before boarding the boat on the mainland. If rats, mice, or other invasive predators are accidentally carried onto the island, they can have a devastating impact on the seabirds breeding there.
- Boarding the boat may involve navigating slippery steps at the water's edge. Disembarking at Bass Rock involves stepping onto wet stone steps. Your group leader will step off first to assist you with landing and spread sand if needed to improve grip.
- Landing on Bass Rock requires good physical fitness, balance, and sturdy footwear with good grip. If you are unsure about the landing at any point, please do not attempt it. If you decide not to land, the skipper will return you to North Berwick Harbour.
- Please keep your lifejacket on at all times when close to the water's edge. Your group leader will advise when it is safe to remove it.

Staying safe while on Bass Rock

- Listen carefully to all instructions from your group leader and follow them throughout your visit. It's easy to be distracted by the wildlife wonders around you, but please ensure that you have heard and understood instructions before proceeding around the island. If you are unsure about any of the instructions that you have been given, please clarify with the group leader before proceeding.
- Conditions on Bass Rock can be unpredictable due to weather and the presence of thousands of seabirds. Move slowly and carefully around the island, watching where you step, what you lean on, and what is around you.
- Footpaths, steps, and handrails may be uneven or in disrepair – take caution at all times.
- Stay well away from steep slopes, cliff edges, and the water's edge.
- Always remain within eyesight and earshot of your group leader and do not wander away.
- Your group leader is a qualified first aider with a first aid kit. Inform them immediately if you feel unwell or sustain an injury. Please also **tell your leader about any relevant medical conditions before leaving the mainland**. In an emergency, the Coastguard will be contacted on 999.

Reducing disturbance to the birds

Bass Rock is home to one of the world's largest gannet colonies. It's critical that disturbance to the birds is minimised. Please:

- Keep to designated paths and areas as directed by your leader.
- Move slowly and quietly around the colony.
- Do not attempt to touch or closely approach the birds. This includes placing photography or filming equipment too close to the birds. You will be informed by your leader where you can sit or stand while you are in the colony.
- Avoid sudden movements, loud noises, or waving objects overhead.
- Always follow the instructions of your group leader, who will guide you on the safest and least disruptive routes.
- Avoid bringing excess baggage with you on the trip – only carry what you need.

What you need to bring

- A fully charged mobile phone
- Sufficient food and water for the duration of your trip.
- Any medication you may need.
- Appropriate clothing, including warm layers, waterproof trousers, and a waterproof coat. The weather can change rapidly, so prepare for both warm and cold conditions.
- Appropriate footwear with good grip.
- A sturdy bag with handles that securely zips closed. Bear in mind that your bag may get wet during your journey to the island. If you are carrying equipment that you wish to keep dry, make sure that your bag is waterproof.
- A cap for sun protection in warm weather and to protect you from any dive-bombing birds.

Thank you for helping to keep yourself, others, and the amazing Bass Rock gannet colony safe during your visit to the island.