

SKOMER VOLUNTEER WELCOME PACK

2024



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
De a Gorllewin Cymru
Wildlife Trust of
South & West Wales

Dear volunteer,

Please take a few moments to read through the following document. This should contain all the information you'll need for your volunteering week, including:

WHAT TO BRING:

Packing for Skomer



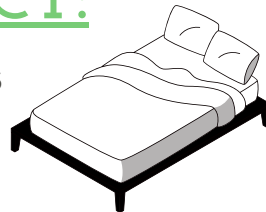
WHAT TO DO:

Countdown to volunteering



WHAT TO EXPECT:

Accommodation and duties



If you have any questions then please get in touch.
We're looking forward to welcoming you to Skomer!

Best wishes,

Leighton (Skomer Warden)

07971 114302

Ceris (Skomer Assistant Warden)

07816 990371

Rob (Skomer Visitor Officer)

07530 796150



WHAT TO BRING:



Biosecurity

Skomer is a National Nature Reserve of international importance due to its populations of breeding seabirds. The absence of ground predators allows birds like Manx shearwaters and Atlantic puffins to thrive.

If rats or house mice were to be introduced onto the island they could potentially decimate our seabird populations. This has been seen on islands around the world, with these rodents eating not only the eggs but the birds themselves.

Rats and mice breed at an incredible rate. A single pregnant female of either species could lead to a population of over 1000 within a year.

The project [Biosecurity for Life](#) contains more information on efforts to ensure biosecurity on UK islands.



To help keep Skomer rat and house mouse free please follow the instructions on the following page.



WHAT TO BRING:



Packing and Biosecurity

1. Pack all luggage yourself.
2. Pack all luggage in a rodent-free environment.
3. If packing the day before arrival, store all packed luggage sealed and in a rodent-free environment. On the day of travel please ensure no rodent has accessed your luggage.
4. All luggage must be closed. **Unsealed luggage, including open bags and carrier bags, will not be permitted to land on Skomer.**



5. Do not leave your luggage unattended in Martin's Haven, as this is a high risk area.

Thank you for your cooperation!



WHAT TO BRING:



The nitty-gritty

To pack:

- Food and medication** for the duration of your stay, with enough for extra days if you get stuck on. Please note there is **NO SHOP on Skomer**. The volunteer kitchen fridge is shared between 6 so we recommend bringing plenty of food that doesn't require refrigeration.
- Bedding per person:** (1 x sleeping bag, 1 x pillowcase) **OR** (1 x pillowcase, 1 x sheet, 1 x single duvet cover). A single duvet and pillow are provided.
- Hot water bottle.**
- Towels and soap.**
- Indoor shoes / slippers.**
- Suitable clothing for **all** weather conditions (this should include **waterproofs, walking boots** and **warm layers**). You will be given a volunteer T-shirt, fleece and/or gilet and a badge to wear when day visitors are on the island.
- Binoculars** (if you have them).
- Red light torch** (if you have one).
- A **bin bag** to bring your rubbish (minus food waste) back to the mainland.
- Earplugs** if you're a light sleeper.

NOTE:

We recommend packing small, light (and sealed!) bags and boxes, as these will need to be chained off a boat and then carried up 90 steps.



WHAT TO DO:



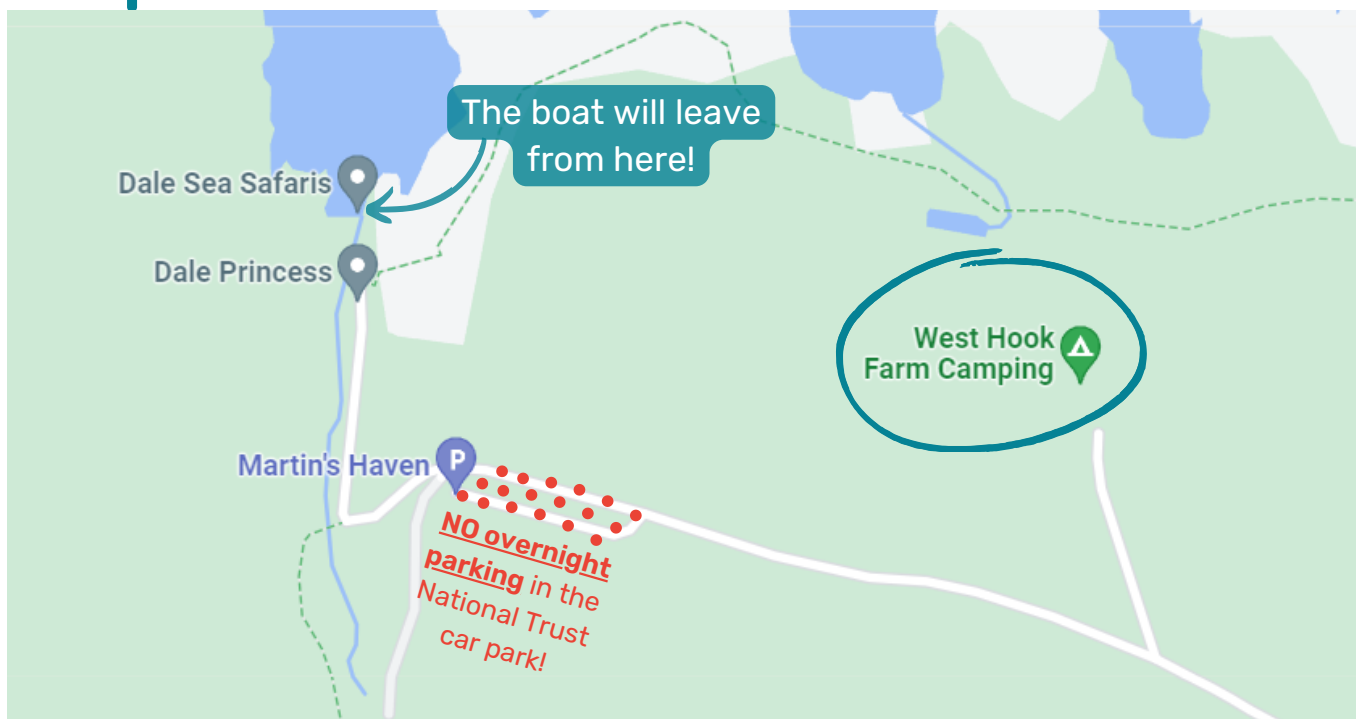
Countdown to volunteering

2 weeks
to go

The Assistant Warden will email you a confirmation email. Please **reply** to let us know you're still coming.

1 week
to go

If you are planning to travel by car, we would recommend booking your car into [West Hook Farm](#) (01646 636424 | SA62 3BJ), a ten-minute walk from the jetty. You must book the week's parking in advance. This costs £30 for a week and payment should be made on arrival by cash or card.



West Hook Farm is ~ 10 minute walk from Martin's Haven.



1 day
to go

On the afternoon before you are due to arrive, **call the Assistant Warden** on 07816 990371 to get updates on the weather and boat times.

As a guideline: The boat can't sail in northerly winds or in strong winds from any other direction. The boatman makes the decision on whether it is safe to run and this decision may be taken as late as 08:30 on the day.

If using public transport...



It is often difficult to make it to Martin's Haven by public transport in the morning, please consider arranging a lift or arriving the night before.

If you come by train it is best to get off at Milford Haven. The train station is conveniently opposite Tesco, in case you need to shop.

You can then either take a taxi (01646 695060) to Martin's Haven (~£30) or pre-book the Fflecsi Pembrokeshire bus through the Fflecsi App or by calling 0300 234 0300. Fflecsi operates within a set zone and is available anytime between 7.30am and 6.30pm (Monday to Saturday).



Day of arrival

The ferry leaves from Martin's Haven (SA62 3BJ). Your boat will usually leave Martin's Haven at 09:00 on the Saturday. Volunteers do **not** pay the landing or boat fee.



1 hour
to go

Arrive at Martin's Haven one hour in advance of the boat departure time to give you time to park and get your luggage to the jetty. Make sure you follow the quarantine rules and do not leave luggage unattended.

As volunteers you are not required to get tickets at the visitor centre Lockley Lodge. However, if it's quiet and you have time, please do go in, introduce yourself as a volunteer, and check for any post or deliveries for Skomer. Thank you!

You will need to be ready on the jetty (to the left along the steps, as you head down the beach) with all of your sealed bags, 15 minutes before departure.



WHAT TO EXPECT:

Arrival

You disembark from the very front of the boat. There is a flight of 87 steps to climb. We usually use a dumper to transport luggage from the top of the steps – our backup plan is wheelbarrows...

The Assistant Warden will meet you off the boat and assist with your kit. After making it to the top, you'll head to the Farm where there will be time to unpack your bags and have a chat about the coming week.

Departure

Volunteers leave on the last morning boat on the Saturday – noon at the latest. If you need to leave earlier, please pre-arrange this with the Assistant Warden.



WHAT TO EXPECT:

Accommodation

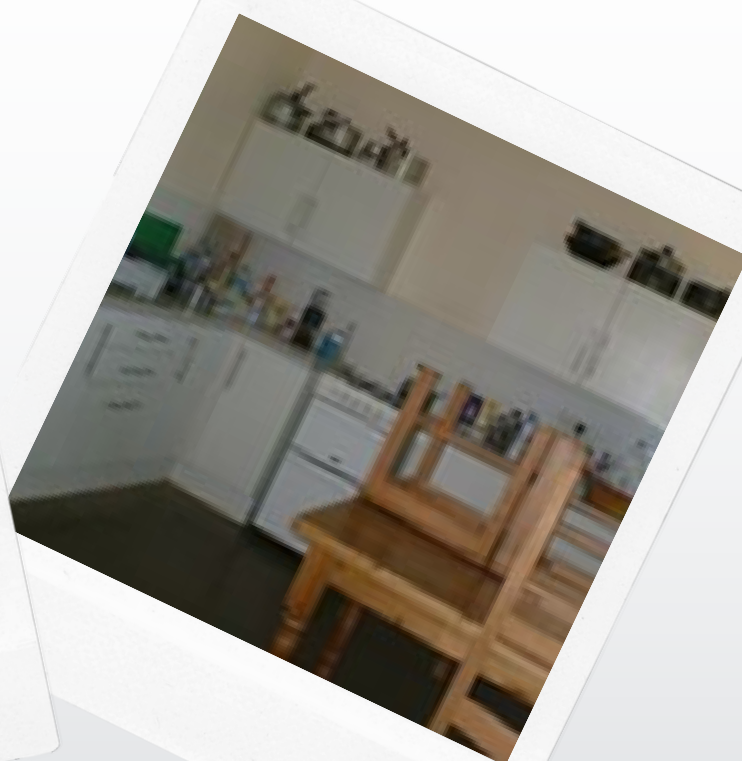


The volunteer accommodation is located at the Farm in the middle of the island. When you arrive, you will be allocated a room which you'll share with another volunteer.

Bedrooms are furnished with two single beds and one set of shelves. The volunteer accommodation has a bathroom (toilet and shower) and a fully equipped kitchen with a gas oven and hob, a chest fridge, and kitchen utensils. Cleaning items, tea towels and toilet roll are provided. The facilities are shared by six volunteers.

There is a No Smoking policy within all buildings.

Note: The volunteer block does not have a microwave or a freezer. Very limited freezer space may be available in the Visitor Officer/ Assistant Warden accommodation: please ask closer to the time.



WHAT TO EXPECT:



Accommodation

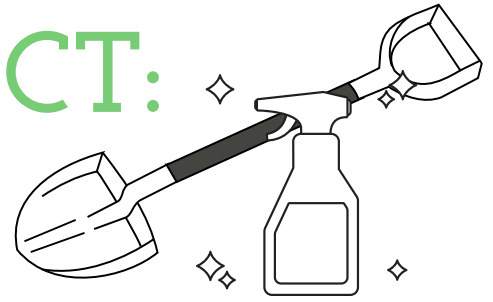
We are completely off grid on the island. Our electricity is generated by solar panels, our water comes from a well, and gas is bought onto the island in large (heavy!) canisters.

What does this mean for you?

- Power sockets (mains voltage) are provided in the volunteer kitchen but not in bedrooms. These are to be used for charging essentials only.
- No high energy appliances (i.e. kettles, microwaves, hair dryers, etc..)
- Please limit your water usage. We would usually ask volunteers and guests to shower a maximum of twice a week; less often in the case of drought.
- Water is heated using solar, and a gas boiler. This means that hot water is not available 24/7.
- There is no heating on Skomer. We recommend bringing a hot water bottle and extra jumpers for the evenings.
- Please clean the volunteer block thoroughly before leaving. We'd ask you to only use the cleaning products provided as we have a septic tank, which can be easily damaged by harsh chemicals.
- Please take all rubbish and recycling off island.



WHAT TO EXPECT:



Duties

The volunteer programme alters depending on the time of year. Year-round duties include welcoming visitors and helping them off the boat, going out on patrol, and cleaning the hostel and compost toilets.



Other tasks can include:

- monitoring – reptile and cetacean surveys, casual monitoring of other species
- building maintenance – painting/ DIY
- paths maintenance – widening/ scything

Duties are normally allocated through a rota system. Throughout the visitor season (29th Mar. – 29th Sep.) the island is open to day visitors Tuesday-Sunday.

On Mondays, or on days when the boats can't run due to weather conditions, we roll out the 'to do' list... there's always plenty to keep us busy.

Volunteers are invited to join our evening bird log – everyone on the island is encouraged to note the wildlife they see each day. This data is entered each evening and feeds into island records and national data sets.





To stay involved with the island, and our sister island Skokholm, and to support our work on the islands and throughout South and West Wales, please consider **joining the Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales and/or the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer.**

Thank you for your support!



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