



Shark Trust delighted at Bumper Easter Eggcase Hunt results

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Summer may be fast approaching but we've been reflecting on the Easter holidays, with the summary report for submissions recorded to the Great Eggcase Hunt! Over the two-week holiday (9th to 24th April 2022) a fantastic 7,560 eggcases were recorded. People joined in all around the UK, from Orkney to the Isle of Wight. With a mixture of organised events and individuals heading to the beach for a day out, the response was amazing. The full report can be found at www.sharktrust.org/geh-how-can-you-help.

The top species found were Smallspotted Catsharks and Thornback Rays. Each eggcase submitted to the Shark Trust's Great Eggcase Hunt database adds to the information gathered about sharks, skates and rays in our waters. With over 330,000 records since the project began in 2003, the Shark Trust can use this information to look for egg laying hotspots and to assess whether there are increases or declines in certain species in different regions around the UK.

A special mention goes to The Bay: A Blueprint for Recovery (a partnership project whose partners include Cumbria Wildlife Trust and The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside and) whose 280 event attendees found an incredible 3,313 eggcases (3254 of which were Smallspotted Catshark!) in and around the Morecambe Bay area. North Wales Wildlife Trust also organised a number of events through Project SIARC, meaning that the north Wales coastline was also well represented.

Senior Conservation Officer Cat Gordon said: *"We're seriously impressed with the number of eggcases that were reported to the Great Eggcase Hunt over the two-week Easter holidays! There were so many dedicated events that took place, and it's great to see so much of the coastline represented on the results map."*

But the Great Eggcase Hunt is not just for Easter! The Shark Trust wants to encourage citizen scientists of all ages to make every trip to the beach a Great Eggcase Hunt. It's easy to get involved, simply head to your nearest beach and take a look around to see what you can find. The best places to search are in the strandline where seaweed and debris washes up, and in sand dunes at the back of the beach as they often get trapped in the grass.

The eggcases of different species vary. So, once you've found an eggcase, look at the size, shape, and features to identify which species it belongs to – the Shark Trust has developed [identification resources](#) to help you figure it out! Once you've got the answer, head over to the [Shark Trust's Recording Hub](#) where you can submit your finds.

The Great Eggcase Hunt makes for a fantastic family day out at the beach, so get involved with shark conservation and have fun too!

Find out more: www.sharktrust.org/great-eggcase-hunt

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Notes to Editors:

Where to find out more:

- The Shark Trust has created a new poster and ID key to help you identify which species you have found. These can be found here and are available in English and Welsh:
<https://www.sharktrust.org/geh-how-can-you-help>
- Once you have completed your eggcase hunt take pictures and head to the Shark Trust's website (www.sharktrust.org/recordyoureggcase) to record your finds.
- Want more shark and ray activities? The Shark Trust have teamed up with the Great Out-tours to create activity bundles filled with fun and educational challenges, including crafts, puzzles, quizzes and wordsearches.
<https://thegreatout-tours.com/shark-trust/>
- Weather bad? Live too far from a beach? Have no fear, the Shark Trust have developed a fun and educational indoor version of the Great Eggcase Hunt for you to try at home! You can find it here:
<https://www.sharktrust.org/geh-how-can-you-help>

Eggcase Hunting Tips

BE SAFE ON THE BEACH:

- Check tide times
- Tell someone where you're going
- If possible, use a stick to rummage in seaweed to avoid any nasty surprises
- Take care near the base of cliffs

REMEMBER:

- Respect wildlife and habitats by following the Seashore Code and don't take live animals home with you.
- As you're looking in the strandline anyway, why not do a spot of beach cleaning? It goes hand in hand with eggcase hunting!

MORE TIPS:

- You can usually find eggcases amongst the seaweed that makes up the strandline. They blend in really well which means they can be difficult to spot at first, so keep your eyes peeled.
- When eggcases dry out they're very light and can get blown to the back of the beach. They also get trapped in grasses on sand dunes. So these are good locations to search.
- Eggcases will wash up throughout the year. They may have freshly hatched, or been on the seabed for some time before being dislodged.
- After stormy weather has passed is prime eggcase hunting time. Lots of seaweed and debris will have been washed up on the beach - this is great to search in.
- Check to make sure it's definitely an empty eggcase and nothing is inside.
- If a live embryo is inside, pop the eggcase back in the sea and try to weigh it down so it doesn't wash ashore again.
- Empty eggcases have no secondary purpose as some shells do for hermit crabs. They also don't break down to form sand.

Shark Trust: The Shark Trust is a UK-based charity that works tirelessly to safeguard the future of sharks, and their close cousins, the skates and rays, around the world. They have a vision: A future where sharks thrive within a globally healthy marine ecosystem. Whilst the team, based in Plymouth, is relatively small, its successes have been considerable. This is partly due to the collaborative philosophy of the charity, working with a global network of scientists, policymakers, conservation professionals, businesses, and supporters, to further shark conservation. Established in 1997 to provide a voice for UK sharks, the Shark Trust has an ever-growing number of passionate supporters. And together they're creating positive change for sharks around the world.

www.sharktrust.org

