



The Shark Trust Great Eggcase Hunt - Join us on an Easter Egg Hunt with a difference!

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Stuck for ideas on what to do over the Easter Holidays? Want to get outside and do something fun to work off all that pent up energy from eating too much chocolate? The Shark Trust has an Easter Egg Hunt with a difference for you to try. Take part in the [Great Eggcase Hunt](#) and get involved with a big citizen science project that helps shark, ray and skate conservation. And it's an enjoyable activity for all the family.

Senior Conservation Officer Cat Gordon says *"The Shark Trust launched the Great Eggcase Hunt back in 2003, when a chance find on a Devon beach sparked the idea. Since then, over 300,000 eggcase records have been sent in from all around the UK and even further afield. New finds from around the world are regularly being added to an ever-growing database. The project now has an impressive 43 species recorded from 29 countries. All this information helps us better understand species presence and diversity - it's also a great way to get involved in shark conservation, and of course, it's fun!"*

So, what is an eggcase? Some sharks, and all true skates, reproduce by laying eggs. These are surrounded by a tough leathery capsule that protects the embryo as it develops inside. Small slits in the eggcase allow fresh oxygenated seawater in, and let waste out, while a yolk sac provides plenty of nutrition. After several months (although this will vary depending on species) they are ready to hatch. The top of the eggcase will open and a fully formed shark or skate will emerge and be completely independent, having to fend for itself. Once empty, the eggcases (or mermaid's purses) often wash up on the beach.

You don't need to be part of an organised event to join in with an eggcase hunt (although check to see if there is one running near you!). All you need to do, is 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 – we've 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.

Paul Cox, Shark Trust MD, said *"In our 25th Anniversary year, we can look back at the many things that we've achieved with our partners and supporters over the years. The Great Eggcase Hunt is one of our defining projects. Thousands of people have joined in the hunt over the years and the project goes from strength to strength - it's fun, easy and a great way to learn about local sharks."*

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: <https://www.sharktrust.org/great-eggcase-hunt>

Additional Notes:

Where to find out more:

- The Shark Trust has created a brand-new poster and ID guide to help you identify which species you have found. These can be found here: <https://www.sharktrust.org/geh-how-can-you-help>
- Once you have completed your Great Eggcase hunt take pictures and head to the Shark Trust website (www.sharktrust.org/recordyoureggcase) to record your finds.
- Want more shark and ray activities to keep the kids busy over the holidays? 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.

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Notes to Editors

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.

<https://www.sharktrust.org/>