

METHODOLOGY FOR AN EGGCASE HUNT SURVEY

The Great Eggcase Hunt is the Shark Trust's flagship citizen science project, encouraging members of the public to report eggcases that they find washed ashore. All eggcase entries are accepted, whether gathered on an ad-hoc basis or from a more structured survey. You can still submit eggcase finds even if you do not know the species ID.

To run a structured eggcase hunt please follow the following methodology:

1 Prepare your survey

Before starting, record the time and coordinates (or grid reference) of your start point.

You can do this by dropping a pin at your location on Google Maps, or by using apps such as What3Words or Strava. Or you can list the coordinates from an OS map or note down key landmarks you will be able to find on the map later.

2 Hunt for eggcases

Start on one strandline (upper or lower depending on the tides*) and slowly walk for a set distance along the strandline.

We recommend you start with approx 250m, which is roughly 300 steps. Either pace this out beforehand and mark your start, turn and end points, or use an app to alert you when you have gone far enough.

Collect every eggcase you find, within one metre either side of the strandline, putting them in a bag or container.

3 Turn around

After you have walked your set distance, stop and record your location.

4 Walk back to the start point

Move to the other strandline and walk back the way you came until you are level with where you started - again collecting all eggcases within one metre either side of the strandline.

On completing your eggcase hunt, record the finish time and end location.

5 Photograph your finds

Group the eggcases by either species or visual similarities, laying them out neatly to be photographed. Be careful if it is a windy day!

Please include something for scale, like a ruler or a coin. You can submit all the eggcases in one photograph, but if there are any you are uncertain of, take specific images of these, so that a member of the team can check the ID!

6 Record your finds

Upload the eggcase counts and photographs to the Great Eggcase Hunt using the [online recording form](#), or the Shark Trust [mobile app](#).

Make sure to comment in the notes the duration of the survey, and your start, turn and end points.

TOP TIPS!

Mark your start, turn and end points before you start. Pace out your survey area first and mark the key locations. You could use landmarks on the beach, or, if the beach is quiet, you could use flags/bags or something similar.

If you have a smart phone or another GPS enabled device, you can use apps such as Google Maps, Strava or What3Words to mark these locations. Technology helps make surveys comparable as you can start and stop in the same place each time!

Not every beach has two strandlines. If there is only one strandline, walk for twice the distance in one direction, marking the start and end of your survey.

Keep an eye on tide times! If the tide is coming in, start on the lower strandline and finish with the upper. If the tide is going out, start on the upper strandline and finish with the lower. Ideally, work on a falling tide.

Scale your survey to suit you. Eggcase hunts can easily be adapted to be longer or shorter by simply changing the distance between the start and turn points. The key is to be consistent (i.e. walking the same distance on both strandlines if running a double-strandline survey), and that the location and duration are recorded.

What to do with eggcases. Empty eggcases are not known to have a secondary purpose. They don't break down to become part of the strandline and they don't offer secondary habitats to other species. If you are certain that the eggcases are empty, it is fine to remove them from the beach. This will prevent double counting by another eggcase enthusiast, or you can just leave them on the beach if you prefer.

*see TOP TIPS! **Not every beach has two strandlines**

