

# Weatherman Walking

# Skomer

**Approximate distance: 3.5 miles**  
 For this walk we've included OS grid references should you wish to use them.



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The Weatherman Walking maps are intended as a guide to help you walk the route. We recommend using an OS map of the area in conjunction with this guide. Routes and conditions may have changed since this guide was written. The BBC takes no responsibility for any accident or injury that may occur while following the route. Always wear appropriate clothing and footwear and check weather conditions before heading out.

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## Skomer

**Start:** Skomer Island

**Starting ref:** SM 734 094

**Distance:** 3.5 miles

**Grade:** Easy

**Walk time :** Approx 3hrs (2 hours + stops for wildlife spotting)

Skomer is an enchanting island and a beautiful example of an island ecosystem. It lies just off the Pembrokeshire coast and is the second largest island in Wales, after Anglesey and one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe.

### Directions

A Skomer day trip begins with catching a commercial ferry from Martin's Haven to Skomer. For Martin's Haven, pass through Marloes on the south Pembrokeshire coast and continue along the narrow country lane until you arrive at a National Trust car park with a daily parking charge.

After parking head to the bottom right of the car park, through the gap and down onto the lane. You'll need to visit Lockley lodge on your right to purchase your landing ticket for Skomer. NB this cannot be purchased on the boat.

Keep going downhill and around to the right, passing public toilets on your left. There is only one toilet on Skomer so here may be worth a quick stop!

Keep left at the gravel beach and head up and along the narrow cliff path to the boat collection point.

OS Grid Ref: SM 760 091 NB - The ferry runs on a first-come first-served basis, with no advanced bookings. It leaves Martins Haven at 10:00, 11:00 and midday from the 1 April - 30 September, Tuesday to Sunday. Do check for up to date information before you set off. Spaces on board are limited to 50 passengers, so it's worthwhile arriving early during peak season to ensure a seat.

Transfer time is about 20 minutes and crossings are weather dependant with decisions made at 8am on the day, and cancellations can be frequent.

Once on the ferry, return fees will need to be paid, so please check the most up to date charge before boarding.



The small ferry preparing to land on Skomer Island.

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On arrival, it's a hefty climb up some steps to the meeting point at the top, where you are met by Wildlife Trust volunteers who will talk you through the do's and don'ts of the island.

After the briefing head up the main path towards the Old Farmhouse. Note the remains of a lime kiln tucked away on your right, below the path leading to Harold's Stone.



### Harold's Stone (SM 731 094)

This feature is one of Skomer's mysteries. It may date from the Iron Age, and is largely unshaped by human hands, with no obvious cutting or tool marks. As with many standing stones its function is unknown and the origin of the name is also lost.

Follow the main path all the way to the Old Farmhouse, keeping to the path at all times to avoid collapsing the underground bird burrows.



Following the paths at all times is vital to the welfare of the birds and their burrows.

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### 2 The Old Farmhouse (SM 726 095)

The Old Farmhouse ruin, sits in the centre of the Island, and dates from about 1840. But it's believed an earlier farmhouse may also have existed here from around 1700.

The island had a busy farming community with cows and sheep grazing here, as well as work horses.

But after the outbreak of the First World War, farming on the island was largely abandoned with all agriculture on the island finally ending in 1950.

The courtyard outbuildings, house a small visitor centre and a picnic area; along with staff and visitor accommodation.

The only public toilets on the island are here so worth a visit before you set off.



Just like the birds; Skomer has been a magnet for people too, with a strong farming community settling here until the outbreak of the First World War.

**Make your way back to the main path, and turn left following signs for Garland Stone. Take this path all the way to the cliffs and Garland Stone, taking care not to trip over the uneven ground and holes on your way.**



Many paths criss cross the island, so it's worth making note of where you want to go and plan your walk before you set off.

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### 3 Garland Stone (SM 722 102)

Garland Stone is a large outcrop of rock, separated from the most northerly tip of the island. It's one of the best places to spot lounging seals on the rocks and porpoises swimming nearby, along with many marine birds.

On a good day you can see the whole of St. Bride's bay, with Ramsey Island and the St. David's peninsula to the north.



The perfect place to spot porpoises and seals, while keeping an eye on the changing Skomer weather!

**After watching the wildlife at Garland Stone, head south west and follow the signs for Skomer Head. Keep to the coastal path at all times and watch out for wildlife along the way.**



A group of seals lounging the day away at Garland Stone.

### 4 Skomer Head (SM 715 090)

This is an excellent viewing point for one of the most exposed parts of the island. Look out towards Grassholm at the gannets diving into the sea and look out for nosy porpoises too.

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Leaving Skomer Head stick to the main path and follow signs for the Wick.

### 5 The Wick (SM 726 088)

Here is one of the most spectacular sites on Skomer Island, where the sea has eroded volcanic rocks along a fault line. The sloping surface exposed to the north of the Wick is the junction between two lava flows.

It's also home to thousands of nesting bird colonies and a true wildlife spectacle. Here thousands of fulmars, guillemots, kittiwakes and razorbills battle for space on the steep sea cliffs and the noise can be deafening in high season.

It's also home to a large puffin colony and one of the best places to get close to these cute and comical birds.



The Wick is pure Puffin heaven, so make sure you have your camera ready



Derek and Skomer warden Bee, find themselves surrounded by Puffins at The Wick.

Here you can walk onto the Wick for views out to sea and over the Mew Stone, or continue along the coastal path back towards the meeting point.

On the main coastal path, walk to a point where a path joins from inland, and directly opposite look out for a small low sign on the ground signposted Iron Age Settlement.

Follow the short path to the base of the rock and you should be able to make out a stone circle on your right.

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### Iron Age Hut Circle (SM 727 088)

It's believed Skomer was home to an Iron Age farming community of up to 200 people and it's been described as an archaeological paradise because so many prehistoric remains have survived unscathed, with some of the most complete and untouched remains of this period in Europe.

These remains can be seen all over the island. The huts are both round and rectangular, and date from around the 1st century BC.

The settlements are fairly easy to make out, with the stone outlines of small roundhouses. These houses were probably thatched; with the roof supported by a central pillar.



Look out for these Iron Age hut circles, which can be found all over the Island, and are the remains of a thriving farming community that settled here in the 1st C BC.

**Finally walk back to the start via the coastal path, which will bring you out next to the warden's house and from here follow the path back up to your starting point, where you can catch the ferry back to the mainland.**