



Castleward Demesne

With 820 acres overlooking Strangford Lough, Castle Ward is one of the National Trust's most spectacular sites in Northern Ireland. Winding woodland, Lough shore, parkland and lake land trails are on offer making it ideal for outdoor recreation.

At the centre is a quirky 18th century mansion built inside and out in the distinctly different styles of classical Palladian and Gothic. The first house built by the Ward family, in about 1610, was a tower house designed with defence rather than comfort in mind. The house, which stands in the farmyard, is typical of those built by the Anglo-Irish at that time and was surrounded by a fortified farmyard or bawn.

There are pigs, a working Corn Mill and a Wildlife Centre in the Farm Yard and a Tea Room, Bookshop and Gift Shop in the Stable Yard. For children there is also an Adventure Play Area and a Victorian Play Room. Other facilities on offer include self-catering accommodation, toilets, off-road trails and a caravan & campsite. An outdoor pursuits centre is also based onsite.

• Local high water is 2hours 15 minutes after high water at Belfast.

Strangford

From Strangford the Lough can be accessed from the public slipway in the village.

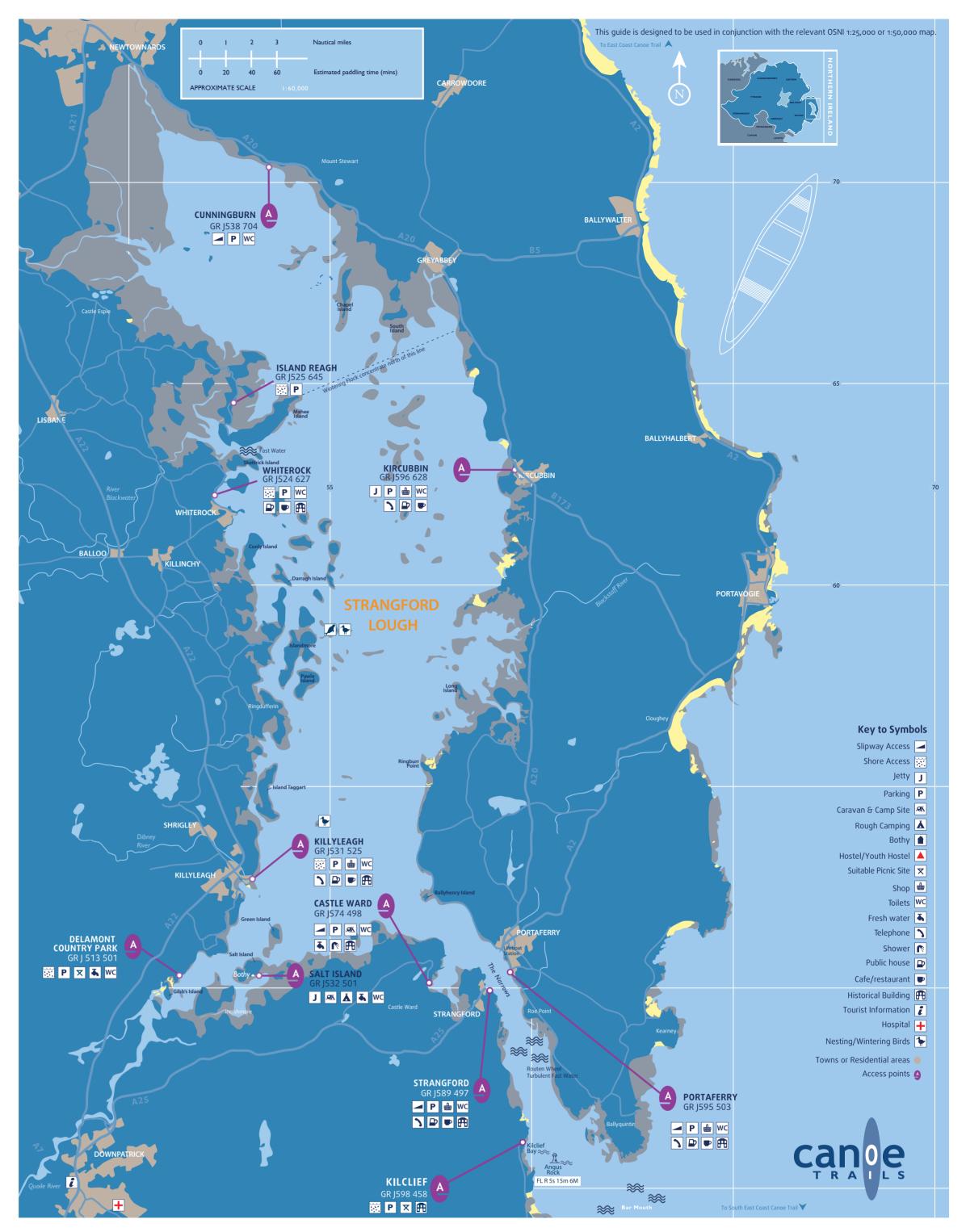
The harbour is afforded protection from the elements by Swan Island just off shore. This small island is a favourite nesting place for Sandwich, Arctic and Common terns that arrive from the edge of the Antarctic or Africa in their thousands to breed on the islands of Strangford Lough each spring.

Strangford Lough is an excellent area for seal spotting. Both Common and Grey Seals haul out on rocks at low tide. They are relatively easy to distinguish as the Common Seal is smaller with a spaniel dog type head – while the grey seal has a pronounced "Roman" nose. Common Seals come into the shelter of the Lough during June and July to pup. The seals come close to shore but can be disturbed by walking and paddling close by. Please be considerate and keep your distance.

A regular ferry service operates across 'The Narrows' from Strangford to Portaferry crossing time 5-10 minutes. It leaves from Strangford on the hour and half hour and from Portaferry at a quarter past and to the hour.

• Strangford village is located directly across the Lough from the town of Portaferry, and as such, paddlers should be aware of the conditions in "The Narrows" (see Portaferry section).





Kircubbin

A small village on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough, Kircubbin once provided a harbour for 40 ton vessels to deliver coal and to export potatoes and corn. Meanwhile an illicit trade in alcohol, tobacco and other contraband has been immortalised in the story of Daft Eddie and the Smugglers of Strangford Lough. The smugglers were thought to use the "Black Neb", a spit of land south of Kircubbin as a landmark to navigate into Doctors Bay where they unloaded their booty in the dead of night.

When paddling in Kircubbin Bay, low tide will reveal dark green swaths of eelgrass - the staple diet of over wintering Brent Geese and Widgeon. It also provides a nursery area for young flatfish. Also look out for the Common Blue Butterfly and for Pale Bellied Brent Geese. Three quarters of the world population of these blackish-brown and light grey birds winter in the Lough.

- Local high water is 2 hours 15 mins after high water at Belfast
- Wonderful launch point to explore the islands on the eastern side of the Lough.
- Be aware of substantial mud flats during low tide.

Accommodation

A range of self catering, B&B and hotels are available along the trail. For a full list of accommodation providers please visit www.canoeni.com or www.discovernorthernireland.com

Canoe Hire and Canoe Tours

For up-to-date canoe hire and guiding please visit **www.canoeni.com**

Camping

For up-to-date details of official campsites and rough camping opportunities please visit www.canoeni.com

Further Information

Trail updates: Any changes to the canoe trail that may occur will be updated on www.canoeni.com. Please e-mail any feedback to info@canoeni.com

Other resources Canoe Trails - www.canoeni.com Canoe Association of Northern Ireland - www.cani.org.uk Outdoor Recreation NI - www.outdoorrecreationni.com

NIEA Water Pollution Hotline

Other Resources

Canoe Trails	WWW
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland	www
Outdoor NI	www
Outdoor Recreation NI	www
Waterways Ireland (Navigation Authority)	WWW

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v.canoeni.com
v.cani.org.uk
v.outdoorni.com
outdoorrecreationni.com
v.waterwaysireland.org
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Freephone **0800 807060**



Strangford For further information on the Strangford Lough area please visit www.visitstrangfordlough.co.uk

Conditions	Beaufort Scale Force	Wind Speed Knots	Wind Speed MPH	Description	Sea State	
Wind Strength and Corresponding Sea Cond	0	0	0	Calm	Sea like a mirror.	Limit for inexperienced paddlers Limit for experienced paddlers Limit for advanced paddlers
	1	1-3	1-3	Light Air	Ripples but without foam crests.	
	2		4-7	Light Breeze	Small wavelets, crests do not break.	
	3	7-10	8-12	Gentle Wind	Large wavelets, occasional white horses, crests begin to break. Noticeable work paddling into headwind.	
	4	11-16	13-18	Moderate Wind	Small waves, frequent white horses, becoming bouncy. Inexperienced should consider heading to shore unless it's an onshore wind.	
	5	17-21	19-24	Fresh Wind	Moderate waves, many white horses, some foam and spray. Hard work paddling into wind or across wind.	
	6	22-27	25-31	Strong Wind	Big seas with large waves. White foam crests and spray. Rescues difficult to execute, warnings issued to small craft.	
	7	28-33	32-38	Near Gale	Big seas with large waves, white foam blown in streaks along the direction of wind. Kayak handling difficult even for experienced paddlers. Communication very difficult.	
	8	34-40	39-46	Gale	High waves, crests begin to break into spindrift. Very dangerous conditions; communication almost impossible, rescues impractical, each man for himself.	

Earning a Welcome

- 1. Please be friendly and polite to local residents and other water users.
- 2. Drive with care and consideration and park sensibly.
- 3. Change clothing discreetly, preferably out of public view.
- 4. Gain permission before accessing private property.
- 5. Minimise your impact on the natural environment and use recognised access points. There are also many unofficial access points along the shore, which may be used with the owner's consent.
- 6. Be sensitive to wildlife and other users regarding the level of noise you create.
- 7. Observe wildlife from a distance and be aware of sensitive locations such as nesting birds and wintering flocks.
- 8. CAAN supports the principles of Leave No Trace and encourages others to do the same when taking part in outdoor recreation. For more information please visit www.leavenotraceireland.org.
- 9. Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the water conditions and the impact on your surroundings.
- 10. Wild camping should be carried out discreetly, in small parties, and for overnight stays only.
- 11. Have respect for anglers keep well clear of anglers fishing from banks and boats. Avoid shallow gravel areas of rivers where salmon and trout may spawn, especially from November to January.
- 12. Take care to avoid spreading invasive species. For more advice see www.invasivespeciesireland.com

Provision for people with disabilities

All sites with slips cater for disability access with varying degrees depending on the water level. It is recommended to check before starting a journey. This guide is available on request in alternative formats.



Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication. Outdoor Recreation NI and its partner organisations cannot however accept responsibility for errors or omissions, but where such are brought to our attention, future publications will be amended accordingly. Canoeing may by its nature be hazardous and involve risk; training is essential for safe participation. It is recommended to take out personal accident insurance. Users must undertake and act on their own risk assessments prior to use of any access site or waterway and review and update during use. The guide must be used in conjunction with an ordnance survey 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 map. Neither the publishers, funders, contributors, landowners, site managers, riparian owners nor agents of the aforementioned can be held responsible for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person or persons as a result of information, guidance or advice given in or omitted from this guide.

Acknowledgements

www.thinkstudio.co.uk

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Design



maintenance costs, must be paid in full before key collection.

The charges, which go towards running, administration and

booking or Mount Stewart office on +44 (0)28 4278 8387.

All bookings for the bothy are coordinated through online

means of cooking. Please leave the bothy in the condition

vne bne svots oft for the island for the stove and any

cooker, two outdoor BBQs, table and chairs. Users must

toilets, a wood burning stove, kitchen area with sink but no

(comfortably)-12 people (max) and offers running water,

Repeated vandalism led to closure of the Bothy in the late

house. Wardens Eric and Sheila Rainey managed it as a

Trust worker led a team of volunteers in rebuilding the

disrepair. In the 1980s, Len Stewart, a proactive National The current Bothy was once a cottage dwelling that tell into

For bookings and further information contact the National

provides a good habitat for the yellow iris. The grassland

Around the periphery of the island, marshy, wet ground

'lazy beds', stone banks and remnants of hedges indicative

once occupied and farmed. There is evidence of paddocks,

Owned and managed by the National Trust, Salt Island was

lends itself to ground nesting birds like skylark and meadow

pipit and there are numerous Irish hares on the island.

Bothy or bunkhouse for paddlers and other groups.

The bothy provides basic accommodation for 8 people

the following group would expect to find it.

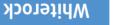
905 until its restoration in 2008.

Trust on +44 (o)28 4488 1411

of a mid to late Victorian landscape.

bnelsi fleč





well, graveyard and the famous "Daft Eddy's" restaurant. way, Sketrick Island is the site of an ancient castle, church, navigation for paddlers. Joined to the mainland by a cause-This facinating maze of islands offer sheltered and safe

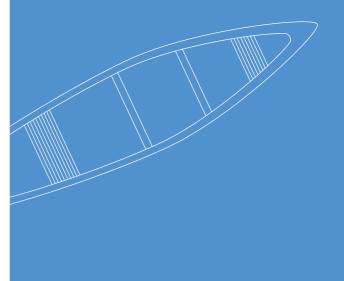
Islands marked "Birds Welcome" should be avoided. bne devolted before padding on the Lough and map for those using the Lough for recreational boating. This The National Trust has produced "The Castaways code" and interest to paddlers, these support vast numbers of waders. Island lie large expanses of mudflats, although of little the area from the 5th to the 10th centuries. North of Mahee Century. Early Celtic monks are believed to have occupied converted by St. Patrick and died at the end of the 5th Nendrum, founded by Mochaoi who was said to have been Further north on Mahee Island is the monastic site of

watched in this area fishing in the shallows. Island also has a heronry and these majestic birds can be to moving water techniques as it is very sheltered. Rainey water fills the bay. This is a great area to introduce novices Sainey and Mahee Islands – running at up to 5 knots as the Club as a clubhouse. Strong tidal currents exist between Irish Lights in 7968 and was purchased by the Down Cruising construction. The ship was withdrawn from service by the built in Dublin in 1911 by traditional riveted and caulked "Petrel" pito of note in this locality is the historic lightship "Petrel"

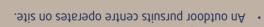
Belfast • Local high water is 2 hours 15 minutes after high water at

- Easy access to the very sheltered Ringneill Bay (at local
- (əpit dğid
- Be aware of the tidal stream, especially between the

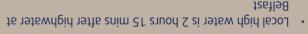








shoreline runs into a muddy bay. Be careful of soft mud lovely views of the Lough and Whiterock. Here the rocky the remains of the oldest tidal mill in Europe. There are sundial. In the head of the bay and recently discovered are blo ne zi anoth dound tower. Near the church there is an old ειςhaeological research include a tiny church, round buildings monastic site. The ruins of the monastery uncovered during It is connected to Mahee Island which is home to Nendrum and marks a chain of beautiful island clusters to the south. Yewesues a value of the mainland by a causewey



Ringneil Bay is a wonderful windy day option

deeper water to the south of the islands.

not to disturb them during this time.

stands within Scrabo Country Park.

frequented by seals.

υπαρηίηση

• Be aware of substantial mud flats during low tide - stay in

Boretree and Chapel Islands and the Northern end of

• Local high water is 2 hours 75 minutes after high water at

energy to undertake their return journey so it is important

away enough fuel in the form of fat reserves, to provide

menu. By the end of the winter they must have packed

Birds make epic journeys to Strangford Lough from their

beinev bne drin e ntiw thereasers are an enormone and varied

the Baltic to overwinter in the Lough. To them the mud and

breeding grounds as tareway as Siberia, Iceland, Canada and

in 1847 as a memorial to the 3rd Marquess of Londonderry,

marking the northern end of the Lough. Scrabo Tower, built

shore winds and has become a popular site for wind and kite

high water. This area is known for the reliable and strong off

It cunningburn there are two slipways that can be used at

Scrabo Tower, overlooking the town of Newtownards and

When padding in this area you will notice the 41m high

osle əs well as sailors. The nearby islands are also

Fairly sheltered, good launching points to explore

Be aware of deep mud at low water

when the tide is out.

Island Reagh

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Beltast



Killyleagh

.emod vlimet e zniemen the 11th century. It is one of the oldest castles in Ireland that ni bnelpna to noisevni nemon of the Norman invasion of England in Lough is dominated by the splendid Killyleagh Castle which Killyleagh, a small town on the western shore of Strangford

island is also permitted. the first official bothy in Northern Ireland. Camping on the ot amon bne dtuo? and to salim lebituen Z. r vlatemixonqqe si Strangford Lough. Of particular interest is Salt Island which to those of the sound the should be a south of the south of Killyleagh is a popular location for water sports and is a good

J26119 • Local high water is 2 hours 15 minutes after high water at

- Wonderful launching point to explore the islands on the
- Be aware of being forced (by the wind) into the main western side of the Lough
- channel of the Lough

Delamont Country Park

1000 centimetres, one for each year of the Millennium. weighs 47 tonnes. The height above ground is 10 metres or bne dtenal ni santam sr si atinere anuoM mort baineup Ireland and was erected to mark the Millennium. The Stone, home to the Strangford Stone. This is the tallest megalith in rolling drumlins, a' Rath' sited on Delamont hilltop, and is This zoo-acre park has mature woodlands, open pastures,

Please be sensitive to the nesting birds at the heronry. nests - up to a metre across, using twigs and branches. From early January these large grey birds build huge, untidy where about 25 pairs of herons have made their homes. sbooW interest in the park is the heronry at Kinnegar Woods

.tees and is owned by the National Trust. Pines. This is one of the few islands within the Lough to Just offshore is Gibbs Island recognised by the mature Scot's

Downpatrick from tidal flooding. fo nwot and stoated that protects the town of

arrange access through barrier. Please contact the Park Office on +44 (o) 28 4482 8333 to

- Local high water is 2 hours 15 minutes after high water at
- Idyllic area, ideal for exploring the southern islands
- Be aware of low tide which makes circumnavigating the

Safety

Canoeing is an adventure sport and as such should be treated with respect. If you are new to the sport it is advisable to contact the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) or a club where expert coaching and local knowledge can be provided. Details can be found at www.cani.org.uk

When taking part in canoeing consider the following safety advice:

- 1. Attending a recognised training course to develop skills and to acquire safety and environmental knowledge is very important for safe paddling.
- 2. It is recommended that canoeists consult the relevant maps and obtain up to date information on weather before planning a trip.
- 3. CANI recommends that paddlers leave details of their journey with a responsible adult based on the shore.
- 4. Carry adequate basic safety equipment spare clothes, extra food, warm drink, form of shelter, First Aid kit, means of communication (VHF Radio, mobile phone), torch and whistle.
- 5. Carry and know how to use a map and compass
- 6. Wear appropriate buoyancy in the form of a personal life jacket or buoyancy aid. Canoe buoyancy should be sufficient to keep the canoe afloat if you capsize.
- 7. It is not recommended to canoe alone -three boats is the minimum required for most rescues.
- 8. Be aware of other water users such as sailing boats and cruisers. Canoeists should make allowance for the limitations and needs of larger craft that are less manoeuvrable and may be restricted to deep water channels.
- 9. The Lough can become very rough in strong winds carrying rafting poles is a sensible precaution as rafted canoes are more stable in rough conditions.
- 10. Channel markers are indicated on the 1:25,000 OSNI Activity Map and are a useful navigation aid.

Winds and Weather

A comprehensive weather forecast can be obtained from the BBC website www.news.bbc.co.uk/weather or from the Met Office www.metofflce.gov.uk

Non-emergency contacts

Police non-emergency (Northern Ireland) 0845 600 8000 Belfast Coastguard non-emergency +44 (0)28 9146 3933

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency - Dial 999 or 112 to contact Coastguard, police and ambulance. Use VHF Radio Channel16 to contact Coastguard.

Useful Maps

OSNI Discoverer Series: Strangford Lough 1:50,000 Sheet 21 OSNI Strangford Lough Activity Map 1:25,000 Admiralty Chart no 2156 "Strangford Lough"

Invasive Species

In order to protect against the spread of invasive species, canoeists should check, clean and dry clothing and equipment before entering the water and before travelling to other waterways.

cane

Strangford Lough Canoe Trail

This stunning Sea Lough offers no less than 80 square nautical miles of paddling playground!





This island-studded sea Lough is the largest inlet in the UK and Ireland covering 80 square nautical miles. It is approached from the Irish Sea through the (5 Nautical mile) fast running tidal narrows which open out into more gentle waters.

The Viking invaders who arrived in their long boats through the fast flowing water called 'The Narrows' bestowed the name Strangfjörthr or 'place of strong currents'. This is the section of the canoe trail that requires a high level of expertise and it provides an excellent challenge for the experienced paddler!

The Routen wheel is a series of whirlpools, boils and swirling waters, which is caused by pinnacles of Rock on the seabed. This area should be treated with utmost caution.

By contrast, the calmer waters of the main shallow basin further north gave this Lough its old Irish name, Lough Cuan, meaning sheltered haven. Here paddlers will find a myriad of channels and routes to explore, as well as the chance to discover some of the country's finest scenery.

Designated as Northern Ireland's first Marine Nature Reserve, Strangford Lough is internationally renowned for its abundance and diversity of habitats and species. Over 200 marine animal and plant species have been found, most unique to this area. Look out for seals, Arctic Terns, Irish Hares, porpoises and much more!

This trail guide has been designed for canoeists by canoeists. It provides practical information including official access points, campsites and tidal details.

Happy Paddling!

Please note: Although many of the islands are accessible in spring and summer some of them become breeding grounds for important and vulnerable bird species and therefore access is not permitted to certain islands at these times. More details can be obtained from the National Trust Warden on +44 (0)28 4488 1411



Portaferry

The picturesque villages of Strangford and Portaferry at either side of 'The Narrows' form the entrance to Strangford Lough. The village dates from the 12th century when a row of fisherman's cottages was built beside an Anglo-Norman castle. Today Portaferry is popular among visitors and well known for Exploris Aquarium with displays of the local marine wildlife.

'The Narrows' looks like a river as powerful tidal waters rush though this deep but constricted channel approximately every six hours. It is 500m wide at its narrowest point; up to 6om deep, 5 nautical miles long, and is the start of a y-shaped channel that runs most of the length of the Lough. Sea level is raised and lowered up to 3 metres twice a day and approximately 350 million tonnes of water pour through the narrows every 6 hours.

A regular ferry service operates across 'The Narrows' from Portaferry to Strangford, crossing time 5-10 minutes.

A marine turbine has been located in the centre of the narrows about 500m South of Portaferry and the pillar marking this turbine should be given a wide berth by all boat users.

The Routen Wheel is a series of whirlpools, boils and swirling waters which is caused by pinnacles of rock on the seabed. The water is much more turbulent on the ebb tide than the flood.

'The Narrows' is a serious undertaking and should only be tackled by suitably experienced paddlers. The outgoing tide is potentially more dangerous than the incoming tide.

When there is a Southerly or Easterly swell in the Irish Sea the sea state at the Bar Mouth (i.e. where 'The Narrows' meet the Irish Sea) can be very significant with large (4m+) breaking waves. This sea state also occurs with a flooding tide against an opposing wind direction.

- Ebb tide (outgoing): Starts 3 hours 30 minutes after High Water at Belfast
- Flood tide (incoming): Starts 2 hours 30 minutes after High Water at Belfast
- Changeable conditions with strong tidal stream and a rough water environment
- Be aware of other vessels whose movements are restricted to the channel, and the strong tidal stream of up to and including 7 knots.