



Kennacraig – Port Askaig Survey Route Information

Route	Sea Region	Ferry Company	Ship
Kennacraig (UK) to Port Askaig (Islay)	Minches and West Scotland	Caledonian MacBrayne	Finlaggan/Isle of Islay

This survey route is ideal for those requiring at sea experience to become fully familiar with the ORCA Survey Protocol and is an important stepping stone to progress onto other ORCA survey routes.

This is a day sailing route. The surveys depart from Kennacraig at 10:00 sailing to Port Askaig in the morning. The ship arrives back in Kennacraig at 14:30 where it departs again at 15:30 for a second sailing to Port Askaig in the afternoon. The ship returns to Kennacraig at 20:00, you will remain on board during the short turnaround at each port. Due to limited daylight hours at the beginning and end of the survey season, surveys taking place at this time of year will do a single return crossing to Port Askaig, departing Kennacraig at 13:00 and returning at 17:25.

There is car parking at the side and rear of the terminal. Please note that parking is not always guaranteed at Kennacraig port, as demand can be high and available spaces are limited. The access road to the terminal has some limited on street parking. There is a regular direct bus service to the terminal from Glasgow.

As this is a day sailing please pack light as there will be limited space for items on board. The town of Tarbert is less than 10 minutes drive from the terminal and has all the usual amenities of a good sized town. There is a small supermarket and accommodation options if you plan to stay overnight.

Useful Links

Kennacraig-Port Askaig route information and timetables:

<https://www.calmac.co.uk/en-gb/route-information/kennacraig-port-askaig-islay-port-ellen-islay>

Caledonian MacBrayne Ferry Terminal, Kennacraig: <https://www.calmac.co.uk/en-gb/ports/kennacraig-port/>

Citylink bus timetable: <https://www.citylink.co.uk/timetables-service-updates/glasgow-campbeltown/>

The Survey Team

The survey team will consist of 3 volunteers; **an experienced Team Leader, at least one Experienced Survey Member and one Less Experienced Survey Member.**

Team Leaders should ideally have extensive whale watching and survey/field experience of the cetaceans commonly seen in the Hebrides and the rarer species, and have experience of team leading ORCA surveys.

Experienced Survey Members should ideally have field experience of the cetaceans commonly seen in the Hebrides and have conducted at least 3 ORCA ferry surveys.

If you have any questions please contact survey@orca.org.uk



Name of person completing the risk assessment:	Lucy Babey	Date and time completed:	05/01/2026 – 09:00 (reviewed prior to each individual trip)
Description of work area being assessed:	Marine Mammal Surveyor (MMS) programme – conducting volunteer citizen science cetacean surveys on board the UK ferry network		
Description of task being assessed:	Marine Mammal Surveyor teams conducting surveys on the bridge of the Caledonian MacBrayne MV Finlaggan and MV Isle of Islay		

What is the hazard?	Who might be harmed?	How might they be harmed?	Existing risk controls measures:	Current risk rating			Additional control measures:	New risk rating			Action / monitored by whom?	Action / monitored by when?
				L	C	R		L	C	R		
Travel to and from port or airport	Marine Mammal Surveyor (MMS) / Ocean Conservationist (OC)	Fatigue leading to road accidents	All vehicles fully MOT compliant and MMS/OC qualified and experienced drivers. MMS/OC must have insurance that covers them for business use. Pay particular regard to fatigue arising from travel to and from the vessel/airport and from working long hours on board. Never drive whilst tired. Take breaks from driving at least	1	5	5	MMS/OC encouraged to utilise public transport to and from ports/airports where possible	1	5	5	ORCA staff team and MMS/OC	MMS/OC to monitor their welfare daily and their tiredness during journeys. ORCA to review as necessary



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				L	C	R		L	C	R		
			every 2-3 hours on a long journey									
Injury from vehicles	MMS/OC	When embarking or disembarking ships/vehicles. Injury by vehicles when walking across car lanes and walking in and out of terminals	Only cross when safe to do so. Keep to zebra crossings and designated walkways	1	5	5	Where provided, use the transport available for transporting passengers between ship/vehicles and terminal. Do not use phones when walking around terminal areas – needs full attention	1	5	5	Assess by ORCA staff and MMS/OC	Assess annually, MMS/OC to monitor when walking to and from the terminals and ships
Slips, trips and falls	MMS/OC	When boarding / disembarking ships/vehicles	MMS/OC to hold handrails where available at all times, including when the ship is moving, especially on stairs. Wear appropriate footwear	3	2	6	Use lifts/escalators, especially if carrying any equipment. Walkways to be kept clear at all times. Do not run to board/disembark	2	2	4	Assess by ORCA staff by monthly reporting during the survey season	Assess annually by ORCA staff
Slips, trips and falls	MMS/OC	In rough sea conditions when walking around the ship	MMS/OC to ensure both hands are free to hold the handrails where available and when leaving the deck down external stairs. Ensure any equipment is	3	2	6	Use lifts/escalators where possible if carrying equipment. Use handrails at all times where available	2	2	4	MMS/OC to monitor during time on board. ORCA staff to monitor via monthly reporting	Assess annually by ORCA staff



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				L	C	R		L	C	R		
			packed in bags/rucksacks and these are secured on your back over both shoulders so hands are free									
Slips, trips and falls	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Slipping over on the outside decks especially if wet/windy; when conducting deck watches for wildlife outside on the open decks	MMS/OC must wear appropriate footwear on the open decks (waterproof and with good grip) and advised on appropriate clothing during training course and in ORCA guidelines. Ensure belongings and equipment are tidy, secure and not causing an obstruction. Do not leave equipment unattended	3	3	9	Do not go outside in adverse weather conditions. Do not cross barriers that are advising of deck closure. Hold handrails where available. In adverse weather, find an alternative deck or indoor location, notifying the point of contact on board of any change	2	3	6	MMS/OC to monitor prior to, and during, deck watches	MMS/OC prior to and during each deck watch



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Slips, trips and falls	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Tripping over charging wires from laptops, other electrical equipment, luggage, activity equipment, such as tape measures, or other hazards whilst in the cabin or public areas	Keep areas tidy. Do not lay cables or leave equipment in walkways. Do not leave equipment unattended. Make sure guests are sat down or stood aside for activities	3	2	6	Gain permission from point of contact on board before plugging in any equipment in guest or crew areas. Do not conduct activities in rough seas or in areas where it will cause an obstruction to people passing by. Stop activities if unsafe. Ensure equipment is used safely during activities. During guest participation ensure clear instructions are provided to individuals	2	2	4	MMS/OC to monitor daily when using or moving equipment	MMS/OC to monitor daily when using equipment
Exposure to sun and heat	MMS/OC and guests	Sunburn, eye damage, blindness, skin cancer, dehydration. Such exposure is effectively doubled due to the reflection of sunlight off of water	MMS/OC advised in the training and ORCA guidelines to always wear high-factor sun cream and polarised sunglasses. Also covered, is the importance of sun protection and hydration in	3	3	9	Essential kit such as polarised sunglasses, hats, sun cream and hydration is advised. Also informed to stop activity / take breaks out of the sun/heat if negatively affected. In presentations, and on deck, advise guests to wear appropriate clothing during deck watches	2	2	4	Assess by ORCA staff. MMS/OC to plan and protect themselves accordingly and monitor their own comfort and that of guests when out on deck	Annually by ORCA staff. MMS/OC to monitor during each deck watch



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			training and ORCA guidelines									
Exposure to wet and cold conditions	MMS/OC and guests	Illness, hypothermia – effects increased by wind-chill factor	MMS/OC must wear warm, waterproof clothing and footwear with good grip, as well as hats, gloves, and scarf/buff. This is highlighted at the training and in ORCA guidelines	2	4	8	Essential kit such as warm, waterproof clothing and footwear with good grip, is outlined at the training and in ORCA guidelines. Take regular breaks to warm up. In presentations, and on deck, advise guests to wear appropriate clothing during deck watches	1	3	3	Assess by ORCA staff. MMS/OC to plan and protect themselves accordingly and monitor their own comfort and that of guests when out on deck	Annually by ORCA staff. MMS/OC to monitor during each deck watch
Hazards due to extreme weather or collision - Loss of vessel	MMS, crew and guests	If in water - illness, injury, hypothermia, drowning, strike from assisting vessels or debris, animal attack	Captains have strict training in adverse weather and will only sail if it's safe to do so. MMS/OC must attend mandatory safety briefings on board which cover evacuation, lifeboat procedures and musters	1	5	5	MMS/OC to remain vigilant to all announcements on board. If conditions are too rough to safely move around the ship MMS/OC should retire to their cabins or a safe place until conditions improve	1	5	5	Assess by ORCA staff. MMS/OC to report on any issues at sea	MMS/OC to assess in real-time whilst on board



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Hazards due to extreme weather	MMS/OC and guests	Man overboard	Decks are usually closed by the captain/crew in adverse conditions. Do not go outside in extreme weather conditions that might exacerbate the risk of slips and falls e.g. very strong winds, heavy rain pooling on surfaces, settling snow, hail, very rough seas, very large swell	1	5	5	Encourage guests to join alternative inside activities / watch instead	1	5	5	Control measures by the shipping company. MMS/OC to adhere to all ship commands	Assess by MMS/OC when a situation occurs. Control measures by the shipping company
Fire on board	MMS/OC, guests and crew	Risk of burns and death	Control measures and procedures by the shipping company. Crew on board trained for such an event occurring. MMS/OC must attend mandatory briefings upon boarding and must be familiar with the procedures	1	5	5	Control measures and procedures by the shipping company. Do not leave electrical items plugged in and unattended	1	5	5	MMS/OC to adhere to control measures by the shipping company	Control measures by the shipping company



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			outlined and muster stations									
Electric shock	MMS/OC	Whilst recharging any equipment, setting up equipment for presentations or other activities	MMS/OC must gain permission and assistance from onboard entertainment/IT crew before plugging in any equipment. Electrical equipment supplied by ORCA is PAT-tested annually	2	4	8	MMS/OC to carry out a visual check of electrical equipment before use. Do not use with bare wires or faulty plugs/casings. No liquids near any electrical equipment	1	4	4	MMS/OC to monitor daily when using electrical equipment. Report faults to the technical team on board. Report faulty or damaged equipment and wires to ORCA in a timely fashion	MMS/OC to monitor daily when using electrical equipment. Report faults to the technical team on board and report damaged or faulty equipment and wires to ORCA in a timely fashion
Travel/sea sickness	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Nausea, dizziness, discomfort, headache and vomiting	MMS/OC are advised to seek fresh air, have a view of the horizon (only go onto an outside deck if safe to do so), or to lay down in their cabin if applicable. Advised they should remain hydrated and ensure they have eaten to help avoid seasickness	3	1	3	MMS/OC advised in the training and ORCA guidelines to prepare by bringing sea sickness prevention remedies to take as instructed on the packaging, e.g. tablets, pressure bands, ginger biscuits, ginger candy	2	1	2	MMS/OC to plan ahead if susceptible to seasickness or inexperienced at sea, and to monitor their welfare during time on board	MMS/OC to monitor their own, and each other's, welfare during their time on board



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Food poisoning, allergies and intolerances	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Illness	Ships display brief content labels for most food available. Some display a warning with high-risk foods such as eggs. Ships encourage regular sanitisation of hands, especially in areas serving food	3	3	9	MMS/OC advised to flag concerns to the crew. If unsure of food content, ask a member of the crew for more information. Speak to your point of contact on board at the earliest opportunity to flag any dietary requirements or allergies, some ships hold a drop-in session for people to attend and notify them	2	3	6	MMS/OC to flag any concerns re: food and hygiene standards on board to a member of the crew and to ORCA	MMS/OC to monitor their own and each other's welfare during their time on board. Report incidences to ORCA. ORCA to assess annually
Illness	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Various symptoms of physical sickness	Ships enforce regular hand sanitisation and require those on board to report any gastrointestinal illness. Shipping companies will often ask you to declare any current illness upon embarkation	3	3	9	If unwell, notify the medical team on board, any ORCA team members on board and the ORCA office. Rest in your cabin if applicable, away from others where possible. If you must eat in public areas, avoid sitting with others if you, or they, appear unwell (e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, rash, or open sores)	2	3	6	MMS/OC to follow on-board advice, and measures outlined in risk assessment, to avoid the risk and spread of illness	ORCA staff to report monthly during the survey season on any health and safety concerns. MMS/OC to report any sickness to the ORCA office. MMS/OC to monitor their own health while on board, and that of their fellow team



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Mental health and wellbeing	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Mental health and well-being affected by remote working and incidents at sea	MMS/OC provided with a point of contact on board and in the ORCA office	2	4	8	Mental health and wellbeing covered in training and ORCA guidelines. Full details of challenges associated with working at sea are provided during training. MMS/OC responsible for assessing their own mental health and wellbeing to ensure roles can be fulfilled on board. MMS/OC to notify the point of contact on board and ORCA office if an incident arises	2	4	8	MMS/OC to monitor their own mental health and well-being and to inform ORCA if required	ORCA staff to report monthly during the survey season on any health and safety concerns. MMS/OC to monitor their own mental health and well-being and to inform ORCA if required
Presence on bridge	All on board and those on board nearby ships	Risk of affecting ship operations	Pay particular attention to your behaviour on the bridge, keep your noise to a minimum, do not touch the ship's instruments and clearly follow the instructions of the crew. Do not leave litter on the bridge.	2	1	2	Do not ask to go to the bridge or communicate with the bridge during adverse weather e.g. thick fog, rough seas, in busy shipping lanes, coming into or out of port. Only access the bridge when given permission by the crew	1	1	1	ORCA staff to assess as necessary. MMS/OC to assess/judge the appropriateness of bridge communication and contact	ORCA staff to assess



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			Keep liquids away from all ship's instruments. Keep all belongings and equipment on the bridge to the essential items and ensure they are stored safely and tidily. This is covered in the training and ORCA guidelines									
Eye damage	MMS/OC and guests	Looking into the sun / glare with binoculars. Eye damage, blindness	MMS/OC properly instructed in the use of binoculars. MMS/OC to use sunglasses as required. MMS/OC to advise passengers not to look at the sun/glare before lending binoculars	3	4	1 2	MMS/OC training covers the use of binoculars and glare. ORCA guidelines outline sunglasses as essential kit. MMS/OC to reclaim binoculars from guests if not used safely	2	3	6	Assess daily by MMS/OC and report to ORCA any issues	Assess daily by MMS/OC
Eye damage	MMS/OC and guests	Eye damage or loss of vision from looking directly into the projector light or spotlight.	MMS/OC to ensure they do not look straight into the lights. Stand to the side of the projector	3	3	9	MMS/OC to inform stagehand if they'd prefer low lights as opposed to spotlight during presentations.	2	3	6	MMS/OC to assess while on board and flag concerns to the relevant person(s)	MMS/OC to arrive 20 mins prior to talks on board to ensure any necessary



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		Looking directly into the laser of the clicker/pointer	screen so you are not directly in front of the light. Do not direct the pointer laser at any person(s) including oneself				MMS/OC to work with the entertainment team to ensure desired lighting is achieved in pre-talk tech session. MMS/OC to arrive 20 mins prior to talks to finalise technical aspects and attend technical briefings					adjustments can be made
Muscle strain	MMS/OC	Possible straining or pulling a muscle, twisting or dislocating a joint, back injury, from carrying and storing equipment	Keep luggage to a minimum. Use lifts where possible. Take breaks and put luggage down at regular intervals	3	3	9	Store equipment, where possible, in suitcases so they can be transported easily. Use trolleys for multiple cases. Store equipment in wardrobes, under beds, or to side of the room out of the way. Employ safe manual handling practices https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manual-handling/index.htm#article	2	2	4	MMS/OC to monitor whilst conducting activities. Stop the activity if unsafe. MMS/OC to look up safe manual handling/lifting practice if unsure, and speak to ORCA if any further concerns or queries	MMS/OC to monitor whilst conducting activity
Assault and harassment	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Injury and/or offence to parties involved (including assault, harassment and	MMS/OC encouraged to report to their point of contact on board (or escalate higher)	2	4	8	Existing actions to mitigate risk are covered within the training and ORCA guidelines.	1	4	4	ORCA staff to assess. MMS/OC to report any incidents or concerns to their point of contact on board and to ORCA.	MMS/OC to report any incident or concern immediately to their point of contact on board and ORCA.



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		sexual harassment), including witnesses, and negative impacts on company and charity reputations	any issues or concerns with an individual's behaviour or conduct. MMS/OC should avoid putting themselves in vulnerable situations, and not go into guests' or crew's cabins, and not to attend crew parties				Particular care should be taken during any interactions with children and vulnerable adults, you should not be left alone with them, as this situation could leave you vulnerable. DBS/background checks are undertaken where the role requires				ORCA contact details provided	ORCA staff to report monthly during the survey season on any health and safety concerns
Remoteness from emergency services	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Untimely response and/or access to urgent medical treatment, rescue or assistance	Ships often have trained medical personnel on board e.g. nurse / first aiders. These will respond to first aid requirements, however for more serious medical issues emergency assistance may be sought. Ships have their own safety and response procedures and	1	5	5	MMS/OC must adhere to safety advice on board and emergency response protocols. MMS/OC must attend any medical examinations and/or complete medical certificates/forms honestly and in full. MMS/OC must make ORCA aware of any medical conditions, including pregnancy, that will affect their ability to carry out the role on board	1	5	5	ORCA to assess annually. MMS/OC to notify ORCA in real-time of any medical conditions and/or pregnancy	ORCA to assess annually. MMS/OC to notify ORCA in real-time of any known medical conditions and/or pregnancy



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			are equipped for such events. Some companies and/or destinations require a signed medical certificate, or even mandatory vaccinations, in order to embark/travel									
Destination specific risks	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Terror attacks, crime, disease/ other health risks, natural disasters	MMS/OC travelling to other countries on behalf of ORCA are advised to have their own travel insurance, including medical, to cover them and their belongings during any non-ORCA activities whilst away. MMS/OC are covered under ORCA's employer's liability insurance when on board	1	5	5	MMS/OC are advised to check all destinations they're travelling to/from prior to travelling. For UK residents https://www.gov.uk/for-foreign-travel-advice For health risk information MMS/OC should check https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/ MMS/OC from outside the UK are advised to look into requirements and advice from their country of residence.	1	5	5	ORCA staff to continue to monitor and assess. MMS/OC to monitor advice on the areas they're due to travel to/from as part of the trip and flag any concerns to ORCA	MMS/OC to check advice on the two specified websites leading up to, and immediately prior to the start date of their trip, as information is subject to change



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			and when undertaking ORCA activities. Shipping companies also monitor travel advice and will make amendments to itineraries if travel to specified locations is advised against				MMS/OC are responsible for ensuring any vaccination entry requirements are met prior to the trip. MMS/OC are advised to note emergency services numbers for destinations they're visiting					
Tender ports	MMS/OC, crew and guests embarking and disembarking at tender ports	Risk of slips, trips, falls. Risk of falling into water. Loss of tender vessel. Risk of vessel collisions	MMS/OC to adhere to on-board advice and procedures regarding safely boarding and disembarking a tender vessel	2	2	4	Accept assistance from operators when helping you onto and off of the vessel. MMS/OC to exercise caution when boarding / disembarking tender vessels and pay full attention to the task. Take minimal luggage ashore to ensure hands are free to support yourself getting on / off the vessel	1	2	2	MMS/OC to monitor and take caution when using tender vessels	MMS/OC to monitor and take caution when using tender vessels
RIB/zodiac excursions or tenders	MMS/OC, crew and guests	Exposure to cold - hypothermia.	Shipping companies and RIB/zodiac operators have	2	5	10	Adhere to safety advice from the shipping company and	1	5	5	MMS/OC to flag any concerns to ORCA. MMS/OC should not participate if it is	MMS/OC to notify ORCA if it is unsafe for them to



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		Man overboard risk - hypothermia, injury, and death. Injuries from bouncing of small vessel over waves, and sudden movements	their safety procedures which all passengers (including MMS/OC) must adhere to. Crew trained to respond to emergency and non-emergency situations when out on RIBs. Companies have their own risk assessments and procedures				guides/operators on the RIBs. Attend mandatory briefings, and complete questionnaires or disclaimers honestly and in full. Wear all recommended and required safety and protective gear/clothing. MMS/OC should not participate if a reason is known that it is unsafe for them to do so (e.g. heart problem, back problem)				unsafe for them to do so and should notify ORCA	participate in zodiac/RIB activities. MMS/OC to notify their point of contact on board if they are no longer able to participate in an RIB excursion
RIB/zodiac operations	OC / crew	Exposure to cold - hypothermia. Man overboard risk - hypothermia, injury, and death. Injuries from bouncing of small vessel over waves, and sudden movements,	Shipping companies and RIB/zodiac operators have their safety procedures which all passengers (including MMS/OC) must adhere to. Shipping companies have their own training certificates which	2	5	10	Adhere to safety advice from the shipping company and guides/operators on the RIBs. Attend mandatory briefings, and complete questionnaires or disclaimers honestly and in full. Wear all recommended and required safety and protective gear/clothing.	1	5	5	OC to flag any concerns to ORCA. OC should not participate if it is unsafe for them to do so and should notify ORCA	OC to notify ORCA if it is unsafe for them to participate in zodiac/RIB operations. OC to notify their point of contact on board if they are no longer able to participate in a RIB operations



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		physical harm from crane operations, physical harm from loading passengers in and out of vessels, propeller or vessel strike, navigating iceflows	all OCs / crew must pass in order to be involved in operations. Crew trained to respond to emergency and non-emergency situations when out on RIBs. Companies have their own risk assessments and procedures				OC should not participate if a reason is known that it is unsafe for them to do so (e.g. heart problem, back problem) Only trained and certified members to be part of operations					

Review date:	December 2026	Signature of person completing the risk assessment:	
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Risk rating calculator

Likelihood that the hazardous event will occur:	
1	Very unlikely
2	Unlikely
3	Fairly likely
4	Likely
5	Very likely

Consequence of the hazardous event should it occur:	
1	Insignificant – no injury
2	Minor – Minor injuries requiring first aid
3	Moderate – Up to three days absence
4	Major – More than seven days absence
5	Catastrophic - Death



Action level table

Risk rating:	Action:
20-25	STOP – Stop activity and take immediate action
15-16	URGENT ACTION – Take immediate action and stop activity if necessary, maintain existing controls rigorously
8-12	ACTION – Improve within specified timescales
3-6	MONITOR – Look to improve at the next review or if there is a significant change
1-2	NO ACTION – No further action but ensure controls are maintained and reviewed

Likelihood	Consequences				
	1	2	3	4	5
5	5	10	15	20	25
4	4	8	12	16	20
3	3	6	9	12	15
2	2	4	6	8	10
1	1	2	3	4	5