

**SCAPA FLOW DIVE GUIDE**

**Lawson Wood**

Published by Aquapress,  
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SURPRISINGLY FOR such an iconic location as Scapa Flow there are few dive guides to the area so this contribution from Lawson Wood is a welcome

addition for the many visitors who visit each year. Do we need a guide, given that most of the diving is from hard boats whose skippers know the sites well and can put divers on them quite easily? Yes - I think we do because as we all know skippers will nearly always take the path of least resistance and make life easier for themselves by taking us to easy sites, easy for them that is.

I know that's not entirely true and I'm sure the skippers here all do their best to make our trip to Scapa as enjoyable and as varied as the

weather will allow, but I think having a book like this gives us, the paying customer, more information and therefore more choice as to the kind of dive we want to do.

Back to the book which is the most comprehensive guide to Scapa I have seen. There are a number of books on what's left of the Imperial German Fleet which is what most of us go to see, but

there are lots more wrecks and scenic sites that are well worth a visit.

After a general introduction to Orkney there are chapters on the German High Seas Fleet and a very interesting chapter on the salvaging of the ships which were scuttled in 1919. This remarkable feat is the subject of several books on its own.

There is some very good advice about travel to and staying on Orkney and a chapter on the Scapa Map project. This is a project to map the wrecks using many disciplines including acoustic remote sensing data with a view to protection of this significant local asset.

The author uses these 3D images throughout the book and they give a view of the wrecks that no diver will ever have. Where possible he has included contemporary pictures of the ships and line drawings along with underwater photographs of his usual high standard.

Each site whether it's a wreck or a reef has a box with the following information: location (here the position is given relative to other wrecks or islands); the depth; the conditions i.e. current etc; any special considerations such as parts of the wreck that may have deteriorated and should be avoided; and finally access and

**OBSERVERS GUIDE TO MARINE LIFE OF BRITAIN & IRELAND**

**Chris Wood**

ISBN 0-948150-46-7.  
Published by the Marine Conservation Society  
Price: £14.95 + p&p (£10 + p&p if you are a Seasearch participant or MCS member).  
Available from www.mcsuk.org.

THE OBSERVERS Guide to Marine Life of Britain and Ireland has been published by the Marine Conservation Society as part of the Seasearch project. Its aim is to introduce readers to some of the common species of marine life that are regularly encountered around our shores. Inside you will find an introduction, 12 chapters covering the identification of marine life, one chapter detailing the activities of Seasearch, one chapter telling you where to find more information and finally a very useful index.

The core of the book is provided by the 12 marine life identification chapters. Over 200 species are described starting with the invertebrates and progressing through the fishes to conclude with marine plants.

Each chapter is dedicated to a major marine life grouping and introduced by an overview of species within that group. Additional references are provided for those requiring more detail. The groups and hence chapters are organised in taxonomic order.

Within the groups individual species are identified principally by one or more colour photographs and one or more paragraphs of descriptive text. In addition each species is supported by a graphic key providing a very user friendly indication of size, distribution, depth range, and habitat.

Species are organised by appearance rather than adhering strictly to taxonomic order.

Location details for each photograph are provided.

Books like this one seem to appear every few years. With each new publication comes improved image quality increasingly making accurate identification much easier. This one however delivers a bit extra and it does so in three areas:

- 1 The graphic key accompanying each image is a great asset. The final decider on identity is not always down to form and colour. Size, depth, distribution and habitat may also play a role and I know of no other publication that delivers this information in such a usable manner.
- 2 The book does not set out to identify our entire marine flora and fauna but for those seeking more it is laced with useful references, typical of which is [www.scottishnudibranchs.co.uk](http://www.scottishnudibranchs.co.uk).
- 3 Even if you cannot make an exact identification the introduction to each group of animals

diver experience for each site.

The author then describes the dive, what to look for and how to make the best of it even giving the best photographic angles. I have to say I have never had any great desire to visit the big German wrecks but this book has whetted my appetite for the blockships and the other wrecks scattered around Scapa Flow.

One interesting thing the author has done here is to research exactly where the wrecks lie as opposed to where the charts say they are as some of them have been refloated and moved. The diagrams show clearly where they started and where they now lie. Finally there is a chapter entitled 'Scapa Flow Reef Dives' and that is what makes this the most complete guide to Scapa available.

Mark Evans, editor of Sport Diver magazine, is quoted in the book: "This is the book Scapa has

been crying out for" I wouldn't disagree with that although if I were being pedantic I'd say it is the book visiting divers have been waiting for.

Publishers Aquapress are to be congratulated for moving into book publishing and producing original and interesting books on diving and I for one look forward to their next project.

If Scapa Flow is on your must do list of dives or it is an annual pilgrimage, this book will give you all the information you need to get the most from your trip.

Jack Morrison



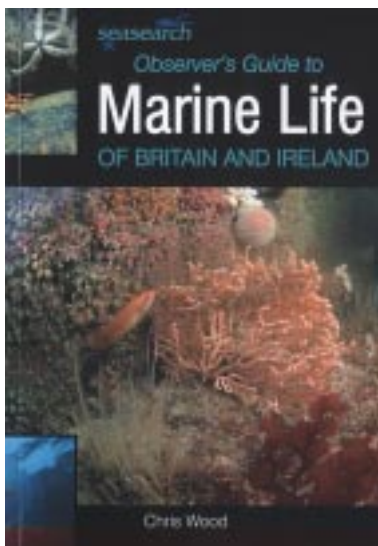
should in most cases provide enough information to get you into the right area.

At £14.95 this publication represents good value for money and for those who enter Scotland's seas it is a

marine life ID book that is suitable for all experience levels. In a nutshell this is the one to have.

The Seasearch organisation comprises mainly of amateur divers who record in a standard format details of their marine life observations. The collected data is then made available to interested parties by way of the internet. **SCOTTISH DIVER** readers may already be familiar with the regular reports highlighting Seasearch activities within Scotland.

Gordon MacSkimming



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Millions of other species identify of Sound of Mull including intertidal (mollusks, sponges, corals) Centre for Digital Imaging DICAD University of Dundee, Marine Mollusks Centre and Lochaline Dive Centre

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