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# National Marine Week

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25<sup>th</sup> July – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2026

National Marine Week is The Wildlife Trusts' annual nationwide celebration of the sea and its wildlife. Despite its name, it typically lasts for about 15 to 16 days to account for the varying tide times around the UK coast. It encourages people to explore the shore, discover marine life, and learn about ocean conservation.

## Incredible Journeys

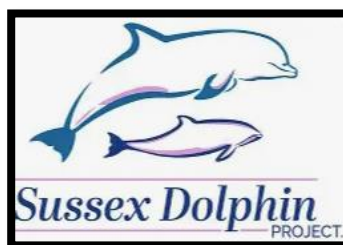
The theme this year is 'Incredible Journeys'. From wandering whales to sea-spanning sharks, soaring seabirds and migrating molluscs – our precious seas are full of incredible journeys. Check out the Wildlife Trusts website, dive in, explore some of the most astonishing journeys in nature and uncover why protecting wildlife has never been more important...

[www.wildlifetrusts.org/national-marine-week/incredible-journeys](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/national-marine-week/incredible-journeys)

## Make your Pledge to Protect the Ocean

Real change happens when we show up, speak out, and support one another in taking meaningful steps, big and small, toward restoring balance between humanity and nature.

Be inspired this Marine Week to make your pledge to protect the ocean. If you visit our Parish Hall, write your idea on a card and display it on Our Pledge Wall, you can help yourself to one of our handmade Incredible Eels. Check out the groups below for ideas and inspiration...



## **The amazing journey of eels**

[Emma Chaplin](#), 07 October 2021



Eel © Derek Middleton

When I've led walks around Sussex, I've loved telling people stories about the amazing wildlife with whom we share our county. But there is one animal whose life story is just so astounding and preposterous that I'm sure people must think that I'm making it up.

Let me take you 3500 miles west to the wide Sargasso Sea, an area of the North Atlantic known to superstitious sailors (and Barry Manilow fans) as The Bermuda Triangle. Today the once mythical Sargasso is infamous for being the North Atlantic's waste dump where surface currents deposit our non-degradable floating flotsam. But the Sargasso still holds one last mystery. Each year millions of transparent slithers- like a blizzard of tiny polythene leaves – rise from its depths. It's almost as if the seaweed and the spirits of sunken sailors have merged with the PVC and plastic to create the leptocephali; the larval stage of the European Eel. These see-through seafarers go with the flow and slowly drift across the North Atlantic on a three-year Gulf Stream cruise.

Upon reaching Britain's coastal waters their appearance changes. They are now wriggling transparent tubes with black eyes; 'glass eels'. Riding the Rother, Ouse, Cuckmere, Arun and Adur they swim upstream. In these brackish waters their bodies darken; a tidal tan. They are now elvers. They finally make it to their Sussex holiday homes exchanging saltwater for freshwater in the myriad of streams and brooks that feed our county's rivers. Yellow-bellied and small-eyed these are yellow eels and will holiday in Sussex's ponds and lakes for around 15 to 30 years. But, as with all holidays, the day comes when you have to return home. In the depths of the eel's mind a primeval urge is awakened. The Sargasso is calling. Their bodies harden, their eyes widen, their stomachs shrivel and yellow eels become silver eels and start their epic journey home. Nothing gets in their way. Even dry land, traditionally an inconvenient barrier for a fish, does not stop them. On dark, wet nights the silver eels crawl out of the water, slithering snake-like across fields and back into the river system.

They'll pass Rye, Shoreham, Exceat, Newhaven and Littlehampton and head out over the great Atlantic Shelf and into darkness. Here's where the silver eels vanish. Exactly where they go is unknown. Yet each year the Sargasso will mysteriously spawn a new cloud of transparent tourists hellbent on holidaying in Sussex by the Sea.