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FORTH ESTUARY FORUM

e bulletin

MARCH 2017

nt conference of the nd Tay Estuary Forums

This year, the Forth Estuary Forum and Tay Estuary Forum will be holding a joint conference in Dundee at the West Park Conference Centre. The theme will be 'Preparing in partnership for marine planning in the Forth and Tay Scottish Marine Region'.

The conference will be held on the **15th September**. A flyer and booking form will be circulated soon, and a programme will be drawn up over the summer. Please look out for further news through our e-bulletins, newsletters, twitter, facebook and websites.

Please note, Forth Estuary Forum members will be able to attend at a discounted rate of £30.

Warning against approaching breaching whale in the Forth

People who have been flocking to Fife to see a whale which has been breaching in the Firth of Forth are being warned from "making any attempts to approach or actively pursue" it. The humpback has been seen at Pettycur Bay, Kinghorn in Fife.

Humpback sightings are not uncommon in Scotland, but a large whale so far up the Forth estuary is a lot more unusual.

Police Scotland is warning boat owners to keep a safe distance from the whale. They said "Legislation is in place to protect these marine mammals. Please enjoy this

afforded to them.

"I recommend boat and vessel owners follow the Wildlife Safe (WiSe) scheme. In this particular case, commercial and recreational users should not make any attempts to approach or actively pursue the whale.

"The scheme, which is a UK standard for commercial marine wildlife watching, includes a code of conduct and sets out best practice for wildlife watching."

More details on this article can be found [here](#).

WiSe Training Courses available

The Wildlife Safe (WiSe) scheme, mentioned above, has training courses available this month.

Three WiSe training courses have been announced in Scotland, to be held in March. WiSe (Wildlife Safe) is an accreditation scheme for marine tour operators (and others) which tries to promote responsible wildlife watching and to minimise the potential for impacts on wildlife.

More information on the WiSe Scheme and list of accredited operators can be found at www.wisescheme.org.

The courses are being supported by SNH as it is an essential part of promoting best practice in marine wildlife watching. It will also be an important opportunity to promote the revised Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code (which is to be published soon).

There are two levels of training: Standard and Masters. There are two Standard courses, to be held in Aberdeen (20th March) and Oban (25th March), and the more advanced Masters course in Fort William (18th March – for people who already have the Standard level).

Please see www.wisescheme.org/?p=1316 for further information and booking.

Marine Conservation Grants – Applications Invited

If you are planning a marine conservation project, you may be eligible to apply for a grant from Sea-Change. We give a number of small grants (generally under £1,000) and tend to support grass roots and community based projects.

The latest round of applications is currently open, with a closing date 31st March 2017. The application process is very straight forward and the proportion of grants that are successful is well over 50%. The projects funded will fall within one of the following marine conservation categories:

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- Marine Reserves/Protected Marine Areas
 - Direct Marine Clean-up Action
 - Education, Campaigning and Raising Awareness
 - Species Protection and Research

Find out more here: <http://www.sea-changers.org.uk/charities>

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