

Hovercraft Launch Site – Prestonpans, Forth Estuary

Location:

Between Prestonpans and Cockenzie on the Forth estuary
EH32 9AL. [Boatlaunch web site entry for this site](#)

Directions:

Take the Port Seton Junction from the A1 (10 miles from Edinburgh) onto B6371. Turn left onto B1348 towards Prestonpans. Turn first right after passing Cockenzie Power Station.



Ramp Description:

The large concrete ramp is unusable – use the beach entry at the side of the ramp to get onto the shoreline. Beach is shingle/rock – at low tide there can be large exposed rocks – pick your route with care!



Ramp Type:

Shingle/gravel/rock (shingle/grit for top half, movable rocks (4-8") exposed on low tide. Full tidal range. Less than 8 degree slope with steeper lip at top

Charges:

None

Suitability:

Suitable for self-powered (any tide level) or trailer (mid to high tide only) launch and retrieval of hovercraft from beach. Craft unloading in parking area is practical.

Facilities:

Ample free parking adjacent to area. Friendly local boat club may allow use of wash down facilities if you ask nicely!

Navigational Hazards:

Occasional boat or jetski uses the immediate area. Forth estuary can be busy with commercial boat and ship traffic. debris. Sewage treatment plant outfall 5 miles west at Seafield.

Cruising Area:

Forth Estuary. Possible destinations include Aberlady Bay (6 miles east), Musselburgh (5 miles west), Portobello (5 miles west), Cramond Island (15 miles west), Forth bridges (22 miles west), Inchcolm island (15 miles north west), Kirkcaldy (15 miles north via Inchkeith island).

Possible recovery sites with road access

Slipway, Port Seton Harbour (1 mile east). Harbour slip, North Berwick (16 miles east).

Harbour slip Musselburgh (private - 4 miles west), beach slip Musselburgh (gate sometimes locked - 4 miles west), harbour slip Newhaven (10 miles west), public slip Granton Harbour (11 miles west), slip at Cramond (15 miles west), slipway at Burntisland (10 miles north west), slipway at North Queensferry boat club (24 miles west), small slipway leading onto beach at east end of Portobello (5 miles west).

Note - the slips listed above are *not* suitable for normal hovercraft launch - they are for emergency use only!

Hawes Pier, South Queensferry (23 miles west)

Other Considerations:

Aberlady bay is a nature reserve/bird sanctuary/SSSI/SAC - do not travel over the exposed sands or mud banks and avoid feeding birds. Land only on the *north* side of Inchcolm island next to pier. Tidal runs around outcrops in estuary can cause heavy chop.