

THE WORLD AROUND US — GEOGRAPHY · P4–P7

Strangford Lough

Northern Ireland Geography — P4–P7

Strangford Lough — key facts

1

The largest sea loch in the UK

Strangford Lough in County Down covers approximately 150 square kilometres. Connected to the Irish Sea by a narrow channel — the Strangford Narrows — only 600 metres wide at its narrowest.

2

How it formed

Carved out by glaciers during the Ice Age. The lough is dotted with 'drumlins' — small rounded hills left behind by retreating glaciers. About 70 of these became islands when the lough was flooded by rising sea levels.

3

Wildlife

One of Europe's most important marine reserves. Around 2,000 marine species. Common and grey seals; brent geese (winter visitors); basking sharks (summer); harbour porpoises. A Marine Nature Reserve.

4

The Strangford ferry

Connects Strangford (east shore) and Portaferry (across the narrows). Crosses the strongest tidal currents in the UK — up to 8 knots. Operating since 1611 — one of Europe's oldest continuous ferry routes.

5

SeaGen tidal turbine

World's first commercial-scale tidal turbine installed at Strangford in 2008. Generated electricity from the fast tides for over a decade. Now decommissioned, but proved the technology works.



6

Historic Strangford

Vikings named the lough 'Strangfjörðr' — strong sea-inlet. Saint Patrick is said to have first arrived in Ireland at Saul on Strangford in 432 CE — one of Ireland's most significant religious sites.

