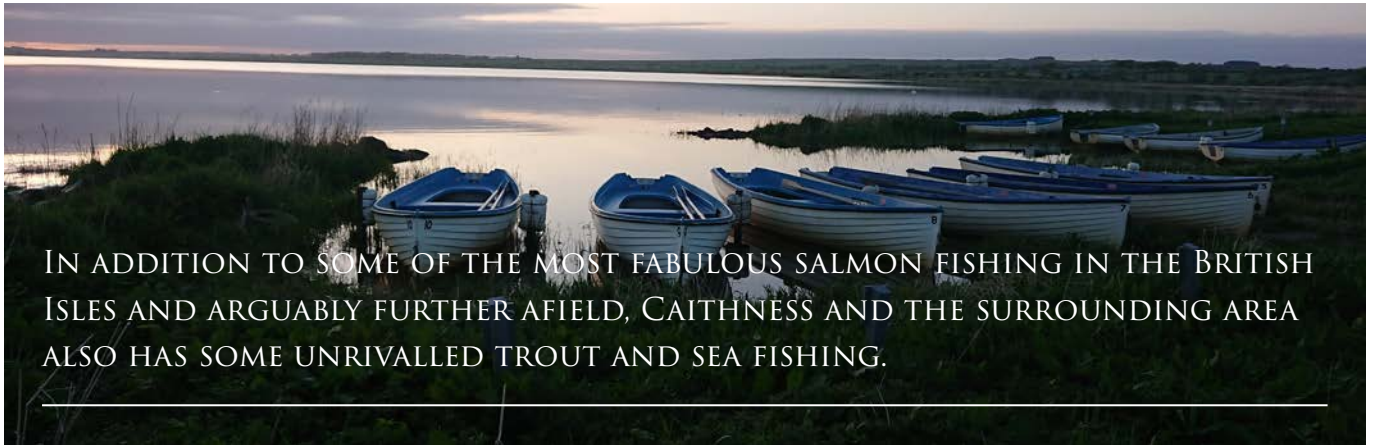




YOUR GUIDE TO

FISHING IN AND AROUND CAITHNESS





IN ADDITION TO SOME OF THE MOST FABULOUS SALMON FISHING IN THE BRITISH ISLES AND ARGUABLY FURTHER AFIELD, CAITHNESS AND THE SURROUNDING AREA ALSO HAS SOME UNRIVALLED TROUT AND SEA FISHING.

Some of the fishing is remote and wilderness like, that said there are many lochs that are accessible to anglers of all abilities.

Fishing in and around Caithness is not overly reported and this allows for the rivers and lochs to maintain their natural character and rich stocks. There are some truly exceptional fish to be had throughout the season. The scenery is second to none. Expect the ospreys to make regular appearances, making breathtaking memories even when the fish are reluctant to take a fly.

This booklet will give you a flavour of what is available. It does not by any means cover all the options but allows for a wide variety of alternatives for visiting anglers.

The two main clubs within the area are the Dounreay Fly Fishing Association and the Dunnet Head Lochs. Visitor permits are available for both via their websites and membership is not exclusively for residents of the area. Most of the Lochs in this booklet are accessible via the above clubs.

Contact details and club websites are on the back page of this booklet.

Locations are given using "What3words". This is a free location application and the QR code to download it is on the back cover of this booklet.



LOCH WATTEN

LOCH WATTEN, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS
“THE GEM OF THE NORTH”.

Watten is open from 1st May until 30th September (Sunday fishing is permitted). The loch has a healthy population of wild brown trout, with fish in the range of 3 and 4lb not unusual (larger fish are occasionally encountered).

10 inch minimum.

Loch Watten is approximately 9 miles from Halkirk.

Boats can be accessed via DFFA website or Hugo Ross, Wick.

Location: **What3words///**

DFFA berth: **ladder.overruns.hints**

Hugo Ross berth: **bottled.squaring.boot**

LOCH CALDER IS THE LARGEST AND DEEPEST LOCH IN CAITHNESS.

Calder is open from 15th March until 6th October (Sunday fishing is permitted). In addition to wild brown trout, the loch has arctic char and ferox trout. Brown trout range from half a pound up to and more than 3lb at times. This loch can be fantastic sport particularly with a hatch of mayfly. It is a large, exposed loch so an outboard motor is highly recommended.

10 inch minimum.

Loch Calder is approximately 3.5 miles from Halkirk.

Boats can be accessed via DFFA website or Harpers Fishing Shop, Thurso.

Location: **What3words///**

DFFA Berth: **blissful.respects.crunching**





ST JOHNS LOCH

ST JOHNS LOCH IS A SHALLOW MARL BOTTOMED LOCH.

St Johns is open from 1st April until 30th September. Being a shallow loch (approx. 1.5m in most parts), it can colour quickly in windy conditions and suffer from weed growth in summer months. The loch has a healthy stock of fish, many of which are in the 1 to 3lb bracket. This loch can be exceptional during a mayfly hatch.

12 inch minimum.

St Johns Loch is approximately 13 miles from Halkirk.

Boats can be accessed via DFFA website (full members only) or C Haygarth, Dunnet.

Location: **What3words///**

Berths: **tinned.keyboard.unfit**

LOCH HEILAN IS A VERY SPECIAL PLACE.

Heilan is a shallow marl bottom loch and is open from 1st May until 30th September (Sunday fishing is permitted). This loch has some truly monstrous wild brown trout and do not expect a big basket of fish, with many blank sessions being the norm. If you hook a fish, be prepared to go after it and make sure you are working with strong gear and a good-sized landing net. Annually fish in the high teens of pounds are landed (with many more being lost). As a shallow marl loch, it colours quickly in high winds and can suffer from weed growth in the summer months.

15 inch minimum, 4 fish bag limit.

Loch Heilan is approximately 13.5 miles from Halkirk.

Boats can be accessed via DFFA website (full members only).

Location: **What3words///**

Turn off main road: **strikers.decoder.loaders**

Berths: **worms.together.livid**





LOCH SHURRERY IS A LARGE LOCH WITH
PLENTY OF SMALL HARD FIGHTING WILD
BROWN TROUT.

Shurrery is open from 1st May until 6th October (Sunday fishing is NOT permitted). The loch does not produce many large fish, but fish can be very obliging to come to the fly and sport can be plentiful.

9 inch minimum.

Loch Shurrery is approximately 6.5 miles from Halkirk.

Boats can be accessed via DFFA website (full members only).

Location: **What3words///**

Parking area: **argue.earth.lofts**

Berth: **intentions.rebirth.planet**

LOCH OLGINEY IS SET IN A BEAUTIFUL LOCATION.

Olginey is open from 1st April until 30th September (Sunday fishing is NOT permitted). This small loch is very shallow in parts and is connected to Loch Calder via a small burn. The loch is generally resident to fish of around half to three quarters of a pound, although heavier fish are not uncommon.

10 inch minimum.

Loch Olginey is approximately 3,5 miles from Halkirk.

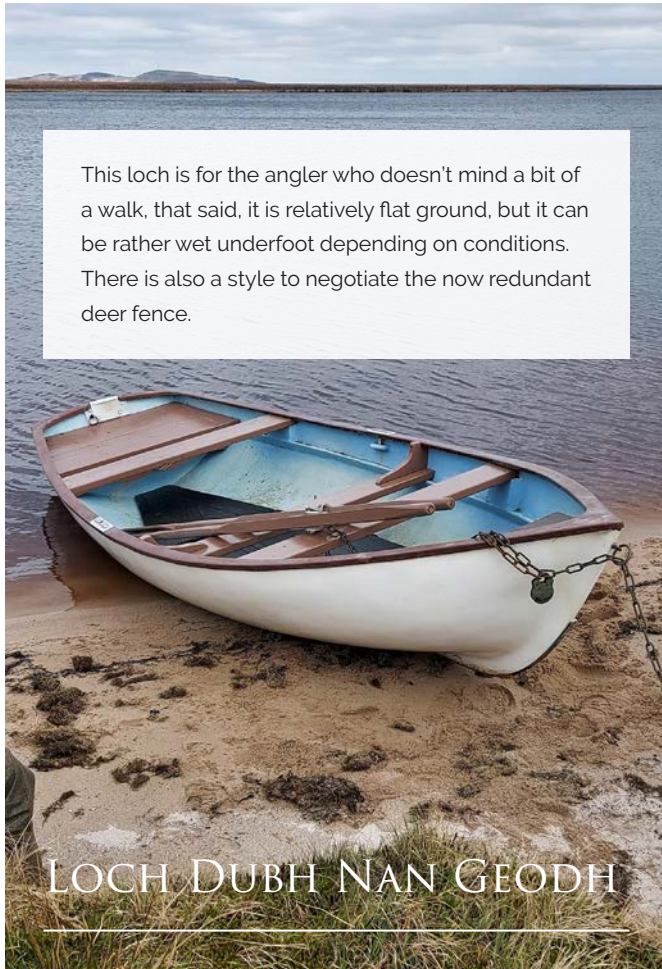
Boats can be accessed via DFFA website.

Location: **What3words///**

Parking: **tinted.paddocks.glee**
(or as directed by the new owners of the farm)

Berth: **bearings.cricket.sundial**





This loch is for the angler who doesn't mind a bit of a walk, that said, it is relatively flat ground, but it can be rather wet underfoot depending on conditions. There is also a style to negotiate the now redundant deer fence.

LOCH DUBH NAN GEODH

LOCH DUBH NAN GEODH IS A REMOTE LOCH A GOOD 10 MINUTE WALK OVER SOME UNEVEN GROUND.

Dubh Nan Geodh is open from 1st April until 30th September (Sunday fishing is permitted). This loch truly feels as if it is in the middle of nowhere and until 2023 was behind the recently harvested Strathmore Forest. With only one boat you will certainly have the place to yourself. The loch has a healthy stock of hard fighting wild brown trout. Fish vary in weight from half a pound upwards with fish in the 2lb range and more not being uncommon.

12 inch minimum, 4 fish bag limit.

Loch Dubh Nan Geodh is approximately 12 miles from Halkirk. (then a 10 minute walk)

There is one boat which can be accessed via DFFA website. (full members only)

Location: **What3words///**

Parking: **weep.airless.advancing**

Berth: **requests.unstated.prominent**

LOCH EILEANACH IS ANOTHER REMOTE PLACE OF GREAT BEAUTY.

Eileanach is open from the 15th March until 6th October (Sunday Fishing is not permitted). Loch Eileanach lies between Loch Dubh Nan Geodh and the Thurso River. It is a very picturesque Highland loch with plenty healthy hard fighting wild brown trout. Relatively unfished until recently, fish tend to be in the half pound and upwards range. That said, there must be a few large fish that have yet to be encountered.

10 inch minimum.

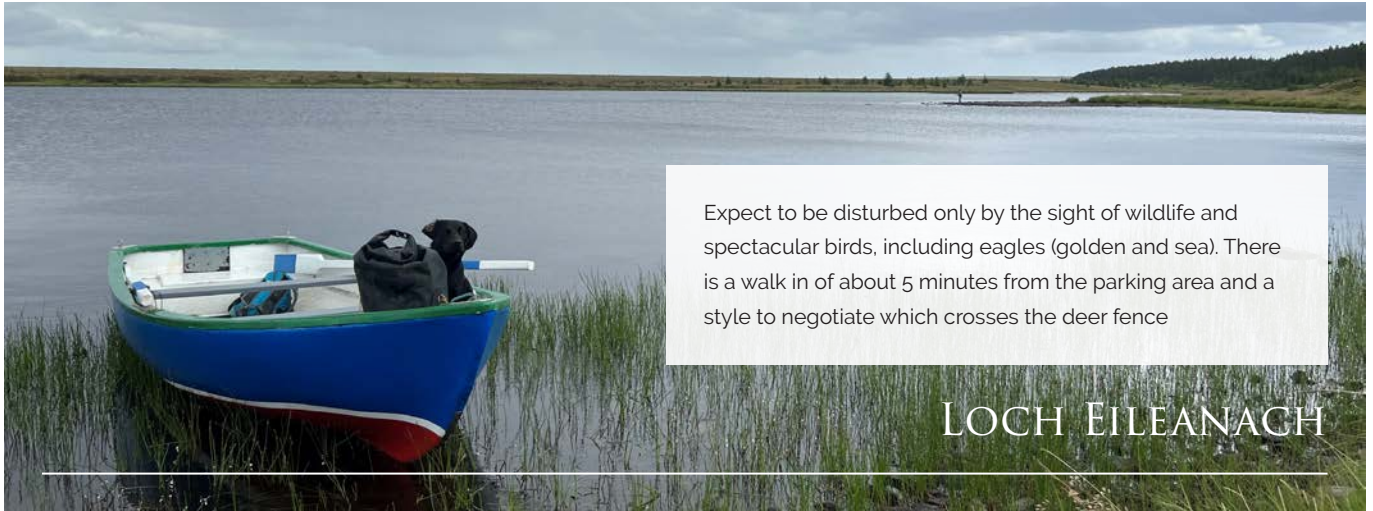
Loch Eileanach is approximately 11 miles from Halkirk. (then a 5 minute walk)

There is one boat which can be accessed via Thurso River Limited.

Location: **What3words///**

Parking: **lace.logs.technical**

Berth: **boating.spillage.trespass**



Expect to be disturbed only by the sight of wildlife and spectacular birds, including eagles (golden and sea). There is a walk in of about 5 minutes from the parking area and a style to negotiate which crosses the deer fence

LOCH EILEANACH



LOCH TOFTINGALL IS A SECLUDED LOCH.

Toftingall is only 5 minutes off the main A9, although it would be safe to say you would never know it was there. Fishing is open from 1st May until 5th October (Sunday fishing is permitted). Loch Toftingall is not a large nor deep loch. It has plenty hard fighting wild brown trout that can provide excellent sport, especially during the mayfly hatch. Fish average around half a pound to a pound with fish over 2lb not being uncommon.

10 inch minimum.

Loch Toftingall is approximately 7 miles from Halkirk.

Boats are available via Hugo Ross Fishing Tackle, Wick.

Location: **What3words///**

Turn off main road: **squaring.armed.began**

Berth: **observes.timidly.grounding**

HARPSDALE FISHERY PARK IS THE MOST NORTHERLY FISHERY ON THE BRITISH MAINLAND.

Fishing is by fly only and available all year round, except in extreme weather conditions. It is stocked on a regular basis and as well as rainbow trout, is home to some brown trout and the occasional blue. The fish weight ranges from over a pound into double figures. There are some truly exceptional specimen fish to be caught and even the smaller stock fish put up a very good fight. The fishery is an excellent place for anglers of all abilities, with excellent access for people of all levels of fitness and mobility.

Sessions are from 2 hours upwards, with catch and release as an option. Booking is required and can be done online. Rod and tackle hire is also available.

Harpsdale Fishery Park is approximately 3 miles from Halkirk.

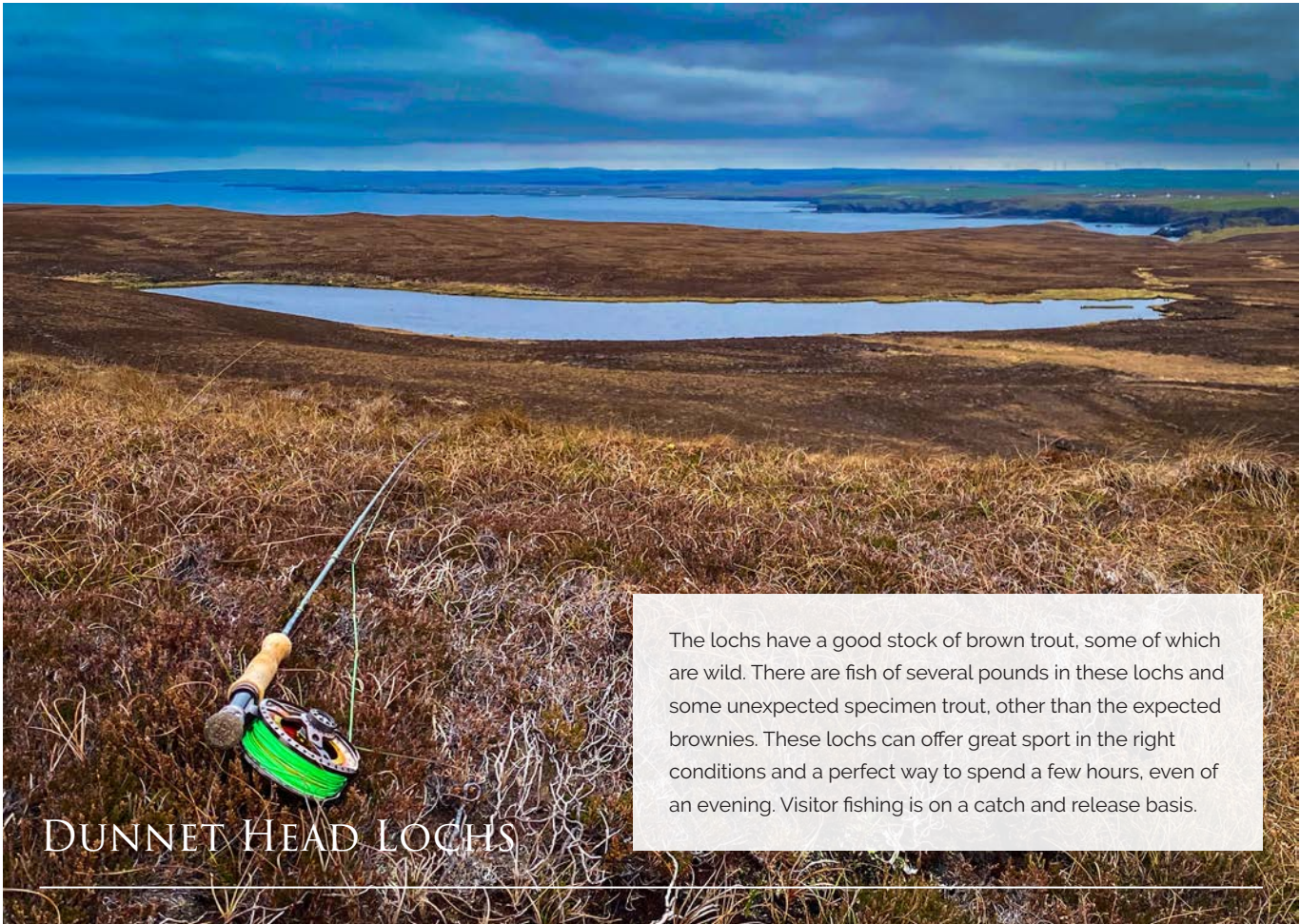
Location: **What3words///**

Turn off main road: **bless.measure.overheard**

Parking: **brotherly.sprays.fluffed**



HARPSDALE FISHERY PARK



DUNNET HEAD LOCHS

The lochs have a good stock of brown trout, some of which are wild. There are fish of several pounds in these lochs and some unexpected specimen trout, other than the expected brownies. These lochs can offer great sport in the right conditions and a perfect way to spend a few hours, even of an evening. Visitor fishing is on a catch and release basis.

DUNNET HEAD IS THE MOST NORTHLY POINT OF MAINLAND BRITAIN, WITH SOME STUNNING VIEWS AND SHORT WALKS.

For those who have ventured this far north it is worth a visit (it's a long way to come back if you don't do it when you are here).

Of the many Lochs at Dunnet Head, nine are accessible through the Dunnet Head Fishing Association.

Fishing is bank only and most are only a very short walk from the available car parking areas. The Dunnet Head lochs are open from 1st April until 6th October (Sunday fishing is not permitted).

Black Loch

Many Lochs (of which there are three, all interconnected)

Sanders Loch

Loch Burifa

Easter Head Loch

Long Loch

Sanders Loch

Dunnet Head is approximately 17 miles from Halkirk. Most of the lochs are only a few minutes' walk except for Burifa and Easter Head Loch.

Access to the fishing at Dunnet Head Lochs is via The Dunnet Head Fishing Club (day visitor permits are available from Harpers Fly Fishing, Thurso and C Haygarth & Son, Dunnet).

Location: **What3words///**

Dunnet Head: **await.sank.widen**





SEA FISHING

PORTSKERRA CHARTERS IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY SEASONED SKIPPER AND FISHERMAN DAVID HODGE.

David has a lifelong passion and proven track record at sea. His boat, the "Guiding Star" is operated out of Portskerra harbour and the vessel is fully licenced and equipped to the highest of standards. The surrounding waters are in an extremely healthy position with many different species of fish. Anglers frequently catch up to 11 different species on a single trip. Catch records are kept modestly quiet so as not to attract large commercial vessels which could quickly adversely affect line caught experiences. Of all the fishing grounds in the United Kingdom, this is one of the few remaining very special places. The boat can accommodate 4 anglers and trips are subject to the skipper being happy with sea conditions. There is a lot to be said for experience and the skipper "Davie" knows his trade better than most.

You can expect an excellent trip with Davie sharing his knowledge of the sea and local area. The scenery is breath taking with plenty wild birds and pods of porpoise regularly showing themselves. Orca sometimes put in a special appearance and angling trips are available for 2, 4 or 8 hour sessions. In addition to this, he also provides tours showing the resident seabirds and puffins.

Portskerra is situated at Melvich Sutherland and is approximately 21 miles from Halkirk.

Trips can be arranged by contacting Portskerra Charters

Location: **What3words///**

Portskerra Harbour: **riverbed.jotting.knitted**





SEA GEM

THE “SEA GEM” IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY GERALD DAVIDSON.

Gerald has a wealth of experience and knowledge of the waters around Thurso, Scrabster, Holborn Head and further afield. Operated out of the floating pontoon at Scrabster Harbour, “Sea Gem” is fully licenced and can accommodate up to ten anglers per trip. Gerald has no problem finding fish and you can expect several different species.

Trips are at the discretion of the skipper as safety in these waters is paramount.

Scrabster is approximately 8 miles from Halkirk.

Trips are half or full days and can be arranged by contacting Gerald Davidson.

Location: **What3words///**

Scrabster Harbour: **dispenser.opposite.stereos**

THE “CHERYL ANN” IS A 24 FOOT KINGFISHER VESSEL WHICH IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY GEOFF HENSTRIDGE.

Geoff is a part time ghillie on the Thurso River and equally at home advising on how to catch fish in salt water as he is on fresh water with his salmon anglers. Operated from the floating pontoon at Wick Harbour, the “Cheryl Ann” normally works as a “long liner” and is fully licenced and equipped to the highest of standards. The vessel can comfortably accommodate 3 anglers. Geoff has exceptional knowledge of the waters around the Wick coast and will quickly have you on the fish. Anglers can expect multiple species and a good catch, as well as seeing some stunning scenery and sea birds. As with all sea angling, trips are at the discretion of the skipper Geoff, who will ensure you have a memorable time for all the right reasons.

Fishing session are 4 hours upwards.

Wick is approximately 16.5 miles from Halkirk. Trips can be arranged by contacting The Senior Ghillie, Thurso River Limited

Location: **What3words///**

Wick Harbour: **altitude.teeth.establish**



CHERYL ANN



SEA FISHING FROM THE SHORE

EXCELLENT SPORT CAN BE HAD OFF THE BEACHES AND ROCKS OF THE NORTH COAST.

Some of the marks are obvious to the experienced sea fishing shore angler, while others are known only to locals who are willing to walk and explore a bit.

Some of the better-known marks are "Longberry" and "The Trinkie", which are both close to Wick.

Closer to Halkirk there is "Holborn Head", which is a short walk from Scrabster. The sea off the North Coast is rich in fish stocks and even off the shore you can expect to catch several species.

"Dunnet Beach" can be a productive sea bass location given a turning high tide which coincides with dusk/darkness.

"Longberry" has seen several skate anglers hook into personal bests. As with all other locations, local knowledge and fresh bait increase anglers chances. These shore fishing options and many more are all within 25 miles of Halkirk.



CONTACT DETAILS

Geordie Doull (Senior Gillie, Thurso River):

www.riverthurso.com | 07734 601562 | geordie@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk

Ulster Arms Hotel, Halkirk, KW12 6XY:

www.ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk | 01847 831641 | jess@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk

Dounreay Fly Fishing Association (DFFA):

www.dffa.co.uk

Hugo Ross, Wick:

www.hugoross.co.uk | 01955 604200 | hugo@hugoross.co.uk

Dunnet Head Fishing Association:

www.dunnetheaddevelopment.wordpress.com/fishing

C Haygarth & Sons, Dunnet:

01847 851602

Harpsdale Fishery Park, Halkirk:

01847 831319 | alanandsandra4@aol.com

Portskerra Charters, David Hodge:

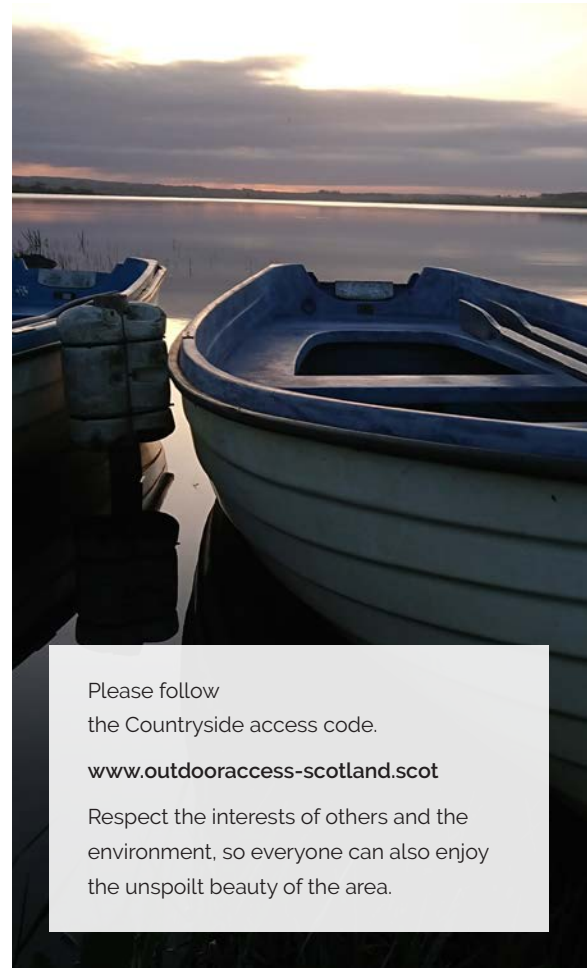
07377247539 | portskerracharters@outlook.com

Gerald Davidson:

07916 365767 | fiadh@hotmai.com

Harpers Fly Fishing Service, Thurso:

01847 893179



Please follow
the Countryside access code.

www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot

Respect the interests of others and the
environment, so everyone can also enjoy
the unspoilt beauty of the area.





This guide has been brought to you courtesy of:

Thurso River Limited

Ulster Arms Hotel, Bridge Street, Halkirk, Caithness, KW12 6XY

www.riverthurso.com

Company No. SC 286337

With special thanks to:

Scott MacColl and Geordie Doull



What3words///

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