



Lifeboats



# \* SHORETHING!

Lifeboat Spotter's Guide



## The lifeboat fleet

The RNLI has an active fleet of over 330 lifeboats, ranging from 5-17m in length, as well as a relief fleet. There are also four active and two relief hovercraft.

Different classes of lifeboat are needed for different places. The class of lifeboat at a particular station depends on the geographical features of the location, the kind of rescue work that the station is asked to do and the cover provided by neighbouring stations. Hovercraft, which were introduced into the RNLI fleet in 2002, have extended the RNLI's ability to carry out its vital rescue work as they can operate in areas such as mud flats or river estuaries that are inaccessible to conventional lifeboats.



## Classes of lifeboat

RNLI lifeboats can be divided into two categories: all weather lifeboats and inshore lifeboats. RNLI designers and engineers are continually working on developing new classes of lifeboat and making improvements to existing ones. This enables the RNLI to continue to meet the changing needs of the lifeboat service.

**Keep a look out next time you visit the beach and see if you can spot all the different types of RNLI boats.**

## All weather lifeboats

All weather lifeboats are capable of high speed in atrocious weather. They are self-righting after a capsize and are fitted with modern navigation, location and communication equipment. The RNLI allows its all weather lifeboats a working life of approximately 25 years. The Severn and Trent are the latest all weather designs in the active fleet and were developed to gradually replace the older classes of lifeboat that lie afloat. Their propellers are protected so they can 'take the ground' without damage.

### Severn

The Severn class lifeboat was introduced in 1995 and is the largest lifeboat in the fleet. It carries a Y class inflatable that can be launched from the Severn with a crane. The Severn shares the same hull shape as the Trent class.

Length	17m
Speed	25 knots
Range	250 nautical miles
Construction	Fibre reinforced composite (FRC)
Crew	6
Weight	41 tonnes
Launch	Moored afloat



Spotted by:

When:

Where:

## Trent

The Trent class lifeboat was introduced in 1994. It shares the same hull shape as the Severn class but is a smaller version. The sheerline sweeps down for ease of survivor recovery.

Length	14m
Speed	25 knots
Range	250 nautical miles
Construction	Fibre reinforced composite (FRC)
Crew	6
Weight	27.5 tonnes
Launch	Moored afloat



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## Mersey

The Mersey class lifeboat was introduced in 1988 and was the RNLI's first 'fast' carriage lifeboat. It was designed to be launched from a carriage but can also lie afloat or be launched from a slipway if required. The Mersey has a slightly 'boxy' wheelhouse set well aft and the sheerline is flattened towards the bow. The propellers are protected by partial tunnels and substantial bilge keels. The last Mersey was built in 1993.

Length	12m
Speed	17 knots
Range	140 nautical miles
Construction	Aluminium or fibre reinforced composite
Crew	6
Weight	13 tonnes
Launch	Carriage, afloat or slipway



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## Tyne

The Tyne class lifeboat was introduced in 1982 and was the first 'fast' slipway lifeboat. It is currently the RNLI's main slipway launched lifeboat but can also lie afloat. Features include a low profile wheelhouse and a separate cabin aft of the upper steering position. The propellers are protected by substantial bilge keels. The last Tyne was built in 1990.

Length	14m
Speed	17 knots
Range	240 nautical miles
Construction	Steel
Crew	6
Weight	25 tonnes
Launch	Slipway or afloat



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## Tamar

The first Tamar class lifeboat is due to join the operational fleet during the latter half of 2005. The Tamar will gradually replace the Tyne class lifeboat. Designed to be launched from a slipway, the Tamar will also be able to lie afloat.

The Tamar will include the computerised Systems and Information Management System (SIMS). Using SIMS will mean that many of the on board controls for navigating and controlling the lifeboat can be managed remotely and the crew can remain in their seats for longer. This in turn means that the safety of the crew, which is of paramount importance, will be improved even further.

Length	16m
Speed	25 knots
Range	250 nautical miles
Construction	Fibre reinforced plastic (FRP)
Crew	6
Weight	30 tonnes
Launch	Slipway or afloat



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## Inshore lifeboats

Inshore lifeboats usually operate closer to the shore than all weather lifeboats. They are able to work in shallower water, close to cliffs, sometimes amongst rocks or even in caves. A new version of the Atlantic 75, the Atlantic 85, will be introduced into the fleet during 2005.

### E class

The E class lifeboat was introduced in 2002 and is the fastest lifeboat in the fleet. It is a fast response craft, developed for use with waterjets. All the RNLI E class lifeboats are stationed on the Thames.

Length	9m
Speed	40 knots
Endurance	4 hours at maximum speed
Construction	Aluminium alloy with closed cell polythene foam collar
Crew	3
Weight	3,500kg
Launch	Moored afloat




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### Atlantic 85 (B Class)

A new version of the B class, the Atlantic 85, is due to be introduced into the fleet in the second half of 2005. Improvements include a faster top speed, radar, provision for a fourth crew member, and more space for survivors. It can operate safely in daylight in up to force 7 conditions, and at night up to force 6. The Atlantic 85 is also capable of being beached in an emergency without sustaining damage to the engines or steering gear.

Length	8.5m
Speed	35 knots
Endurance	3 hours at maximum speed
Construction	Fibre reinforced composite (FRC)
Crew	3/4
Weight	1.8 tonnes
Launch	Trolley, floating boathouse or davit

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## Atlantic 75 (B class)

The Atlantic 75 is a rigid inflatable lifeboat. It was introduced into the fleet in 1993 to replace the Atlantic 21. The '75' is derived from the length of the lifeboat, which is nearly 7.5m. In the event of a capsize, a crew member activates a gas bottle to inflate the righting bag. The lifeboat turns upright within a few seconds. The engines are inversion-proofed so they can be restarted after a capsize. The Atlantic 75 can be launched in conditions up to near gale force 7. 12 stations still operate Atlantic 21s.

Length	7.5m
Speed	32 knots
Endurance	3 hours at maximum speed
Construction	Fibre reinforced composite (FRC)
Crew	3
Weight	1.7 tonnes
Launch	Trolley, floating boathouse or davit



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## D class

The D class is fully inflatable and is the smallest lifeboat in the fleet. It was introduced in 1963 and is ideal for rescues close to shore in fair to moderate conditions. It has a single outboard engine and can be righted manually by the crew after a capsize. The design of the D class has continued to evolve since its introduction. The figures given below are for the latest version, which was introduced in 2003.

Length	5m
Speed	25 knots
Endurance	3 hours at maximum speed
Construction	Hypalon coated polyester
Crew	2 or 3
Weight	436kg
Launch	Trolley or davit



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## Hovercraft

Hovercraft were introduced into the fleet in 2002. They are able to operate in areas of mud, sand and very shallow water and are particularly useful for shoreline searches. Lift is provided by the build up of air pressure under the craft and thrust by two large fans mounted on the back that act in the same way as aeroplane propellers. Steering is provided by aerofoil-shaped 'rudders' located behind the propellers.

Length	8m
Speed	30 knots
Endurance	3 hours at maximum speed
Construction	Marine grade aluminium with moulded fibre reinforced composites
Crew	2 - 4
Weight	2,400kg
Launch	Bespoke transporter



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