

The story of salt making in Scotland can be found at sites all around the coast. Many only made salt for a brief period of time. Physical remains survive in the remotest places, like Brora and Eday, whilst others in more economically active towns such as Saltcotes were demolished and the sites were redeveloped for other industries. There are concentrations on the Rhinns of Galloway (perhaps cover for smuggling from Ireland), and on the outer Firths of Clyde and Forth linked to the adjacent coalfields and supplying an important export trade as well as the local fishing industries.



The Ecosal network in Scotland is supported by The SCAPE Trust, a charity that seeks to research, conserve and promote the archaeology of Scotland's coast. SCAPE is especially interested in remains that are threatened by coastal erosion.  
[www.scapetrust.org/](http://www.scapetrust.org/)

The importance of salt making was underlined at the beginning of the eighteenth century when salt making was mentioned in Article 8 of the Act of Union between Scotland and England in 1707. Salt smuggling between England, Scotland and Ireland evaded the Salt Tax. Until 1775 Scottish salt workers could be sold along with their salt works, treating them like goods and chattels.

## Brora, Sutherland



[www.shorewatch.co.uk/brora/](http://www.shorewatch.co.uk/brora/)  
Adjacent to the most northerly coal pits in Britain. Established in 1598 by Lady Jean Gordon, Countess of Sutherland and her son, John the 12th Earl of Sutherland. There were three successive works - the last was closed in 1825 following the abolition of the Salt Tax.

## Galdenoch, Dumfries and Galloway



[www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/60380/details/salt+pans+bay+galdenoch/](http://www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/60380/details/salt+pans+bay+galdenoch/)  
This small remote saltworks worked from at least 1741 until the late 18th century, burning peat fuel and probably using a natural rockpool as its bucket pot. The ruins of the panhouse, other buildings, and enclosures can be traced.

## Maryborough Salt Works, Prestwick



[www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/sc-40332](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/sc-40332)  
Built c.1760 with accommodation above the salt pans. Described as the most complete upstanding remains of the salt boiling industry in Scotland. Prestwick burgh records suggest the industry existed by 1480. Currently owned by the St Nicholas Golf Course, there are no plans for restoration at present and they remain on the Buildings at Risk Register.

## Bucket Pots

Sea water captured in rock cut basins at high tide and was bucketed into pan houses. Later and larger works used windmills and even steam engines to raise the seawater into storage tanks feeding into the panhouses.

## Calf of Eday, Orkney



[www.visiteday.com/](http://www.visiteday.com/)  
The most northerly, and remote, site in the ECOSAL route. 12 salt pans are recorded as being built about 1633, and a charter exists for salt making in 1672. Salt making used island peat to evaporate sea water. The apsidal ends have now been largely washed away.

## Cock of Arran



[www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/39803/](http://www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/39803/)  
Salt was made here between 1710 and 1735. Pans were made in Dalkeith and transported to Arran in sections with salters commissioned from Saltcoats and Bowness. The salt house retains the vaulted furnace and stone piers on which the pan was mounted. Also a giral and ranges for workers and colliers dwellings and accommodation for salt excise officers.

## East Coast Sites

There were a string of salt works constructed on Scotland's east coast, many on the Firth of Forth, where the remains at St Monans, Fife have been excavated. They are easily accessed and have interpretation panels.

## St Monans, Fife



[www.fife-education.org.uk/energy/SaltPans/info.htm](http://www.fife-education.org.uk/energy/SaltPans/info.htm)  
Described in 1790 as 'One of the neatest and best contrived salt-works upon the coast'. Sir John Anstruther and Robert Fall established the Newark Coal and Salt Company in 1771 - a windmill pumped up seawater from rock-cut tanks on the foreshore to supply a row of nine panhouses.