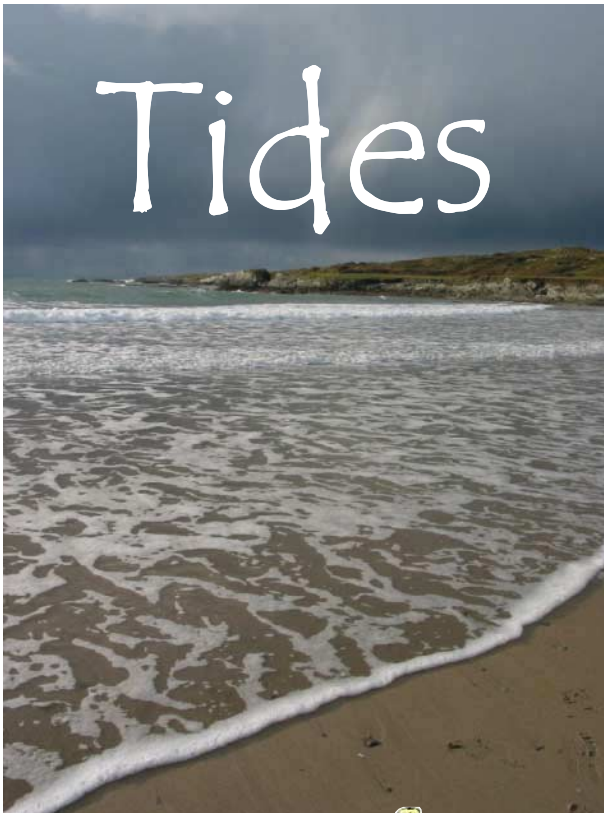


Special Feature

Photo: © Robbie Murphy



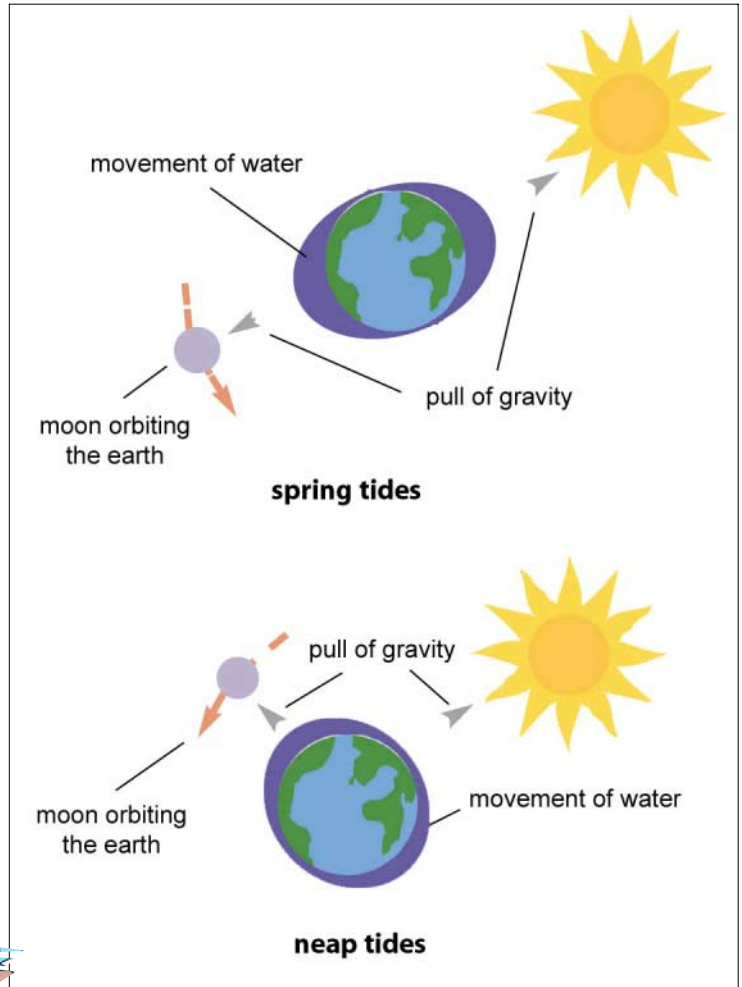
Think Safety



It is very important to be aware that, during a spring tide, water levels rise very quickly! An incoming tide may trap you on a sand bank or at the base of a cliff.

To explore safely:

- find out the times of low and high tides;
- tell someone where you are going.
- don't go alone.
- pay attention to any warning signs.
- explore before low tide, so that you are working while the tide is still going out. Keep an eye on the turn of the tide. Remember, the tide rises quickly during a spring tide and it can come in very quickly over a flat, sandy shore.
- work your way up the beach, towards land.



Twice each day around our coasts, the sea level rises and falls. This is called the tide and it has a huge effect on one of the most fascinating of all environments - the seashore.

Tides are caused by the effect of the sun's and moon's gravity on the Earth's oceans. This gravity pulls on the oceans, causing water to move away from some areas and gather to form "bulges" in others. In areas where the water "bulges" high tides are created, leaving low tides where the water has been drawn away.

Spring Tides

Every two weeks, when the sun and moon are "in a straight line" with the earth, the pull of gravity is

especially strong. This causes very high tides and equally very low tides, which are called spring tides.

Neap Tides

When the moon and sun are at right angles to the earth, the effect is not so great, giving less extreme high and low tides. These smaller tides are called neap tides.

Information on tides in your area can be obtained from local newspapers or in special tide-table books (available from boat accessory shops and from some newsagents).

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