

Marine Litter Watch >



Newsletter
Issue 07 - Spring/Summer 2016



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Marine Litter Watch

Newsletter

Issue 07 – Spring/Summer 2016

Hello & Welcome

by Susan Cramer, Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA. Contact: susan.cramer@daera-ni.gov.uk

Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of Marine Litter Watch. Thank you to everyone who has contributed by sending in articles, images, updates and details of events.

Transformation of Central Government

The functions of the Northern Ireland Departments have changed. The new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for agriculture, environment, marine, fisheries, forestry, sustainability and rural affairs.

Responsibility for the Marine Litter Strategy now lies with Marine and Fisheries Division, within the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group of DAERA. Marine and Fisheries Division is now responsible for the marine functions of the Department of the Environment, the fisheries functions of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Inland Fisheries functions of the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

The new structures will help to ensure the sustainable use of the marine environment. For more information visit <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>

Marine Art Competition

Congratulations to Mill Strand Integrated Primary School from Portrush who were winners in the Titanic Belfast Marine Art Exhibition for their artwork “The Lost Fish” which is our cover page. “The Lost Fish” is made up of litter found on local beaches. This is part of the ongoing environmental work carried out at Mill Strand. The sign is written on a cooker door; the fish is made of driftwood and, as a child commented, is lost in an



Pupils from Mill Strand Integrated Primary School, Portrush

ocean of rubbish. This is all mounted on a pallet surrounded by netting found on the beach at West Strand.

The schools won a trip to the Ugly Animals Roadshow and had a great day.

Alert – Ammunition is on our shore

The UK disposed of weapons at Beaufort Dyke, a trench between Scotland and Northern Ireland. Since the 1990s, almost 200 shells, incendiaries and phosphorus flares have been washed up. Phosphorus flares are stable in water, but when they dry out, they fume and spontaneous combustion follows. **If you see anything you suspect might be ammunition DO NOT touch it and call the police immediately.**



Unexploded Munitions shell

Article Summary

The theme of this edition of Marine Litter Watch is the impact people are making at a local, organisational and international level to addressing the problem of marine litter.

Shay and Olivia from the Love Your Lough Group, based in Carlingford, describe how grass roots community action is helping to promote and preserve the beautiful habitat of Carlingford Lough.

Kevin Quigley, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority assesses the success of the Fishing For Litter project two years on and describes how the Authority is committed to improving the environment through working to change culture in the Co. Down area.

Gillian Simpson describes the Loughs Agency's Foyle Ambassadors Programme, how volunteers learn about the importance of conserving and protecting their environment and are undertaking clean ups in the Lough Foyle area.

Finally **Sandy Cruickshank** from Defra describes how activities we are undertaking at a local level are being coordinated at a regional (North East Atlantic) level through the OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.

News

Review of Marine Litter Strategy

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the questionnaire as part of the review of the Marine Litter Strategy. A summary of responses will soon be published on our website <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/marine-litter>

“More plastic than fish in the sea by 2050”

This quote from a Report from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, [“The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics”](#) gathered considerable media attention. You may have also heard that the European Commission released a [‘Circular Economy Package’](#) in December 2015, which contained references to marine litter too.

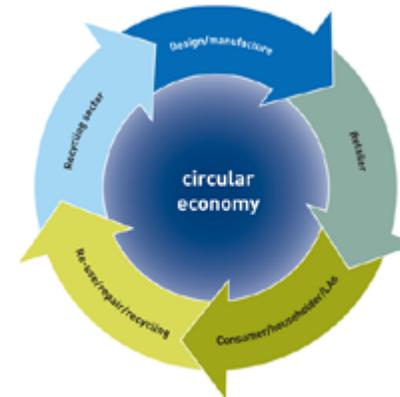
So, how does the ‘Circular Economy’ relate to Marine Litter?

A circular economy is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then

recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life. For further information please see <http://www.wrap.org.uk/about-us/about/wrap-and-circular-economy>

Northern Ireland Response

The private sector is leading the way on circularity, while DAERA is working with other Departments on ways to support this transition.



Circular Economy – End of Life Nets

MCB Seafoods has established a project to recycle nets from ports in Sussex. The project is a result of a

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End-of-life fishing nets

workshop organised by World Animal Protection and partners from Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI). This allows the fishermen to have their end of life fishing gear collected free of charge and then sent for recycling, saving the fishermen up to £300. The initiative aims to reduce costs to fishermen and protect the marine environment.

Collaborative Working

A similar initiative is being explored in Scotland by KIMO Fishing for Litter coordinator, Graham Humphreys. Both schemes are working with the same supplier, PlastiX which is based in Denmark. KIMO and the World Animal Protection charity are working together to find more ports to participate in the scheme.

Updates



Live Here Love Here

The Live Here Love Here partnership campaign goes from strength to strength with an action packed programme of events. To learn more about upcoming events please visit <http://www.livehereandlovehere.org>

May was a busy month, with Coca-Cola and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's Clean Coast Week and Let's Clean Up Europe Day 6-15th May. We engaged with 1065 volunteers and collected nearly 2.5 tonnes of litter during this dedicated week of action.

We celebrated #2minutebeachclean Day on 14th May. [The last edition of Marine Litter Watch](#) featured an article on this by Tracey McKane.

On 1 June we celebrated the success of our beaches at the Blue Flag and Seaside Awards in Portrush with 10 International Blue Flags beaches, 2 International Blue Flags marinas, 7 Seaside Rural Awards and 4 Seaside Resort Awards. Congratulations to everyone for their hard work in making this happen.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine Litter

Thousands of people world-wide took part in the MOOC on marine litter. Local student Aoife O'Kane, who is currently on placement with Mid and East Antrim Council, was one of them. The course began with an introduction to the problems caused by marine litter and then focused on global case studies of campaigns to combat litter.

Aoife said, "From reading the reports and watching the videos, I learned that communities are willing to help when they are motivated and informed. As part of my course work I devised a clean-up strategy for Larne Lough, an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) using the DPSIR methodology. This involved brainstorming the Drivers, Pressures, State, Impacts and Responses for the case. This helped me understand the causes and culture of littering and how we can implement change that will discourage people from littering in the future."

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Coastwatch Survey Leads to Major Beach Clean at Kilroot

In 2015 Ulster Wildlife partnered with Coastwatch Europe to coordinate coastal eco-audit surveys in Northern Ireland. 37 were undertaken from 15 September to 15 October, contributing to a total of 80 Coastwatch surveys completed for Northern Ireland. The surveys highlighted problem areas for litter, the worst of which was at Kilroot, Co. Antrim, where the currents and winds on Belfast Lough conspired to wash ashore large amounts of plastic litter. Ulster Wildlife worked with AES Kilroot Green Team, and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to organise litter lifts in November 2015 and in February 2016.



UW Kilroot Cleanup Team 2015

116 sacks of litter, along with gas tanks, plastic barrels, tyres and a range of other debris have been removed from the shore and we are still only half way through the clean-up operation. Further litter lifts are scheduled to finish the job. Our aim is to get the build-up of litter removed to a point where AES Green Team members can maintain the shoreline into the future.

To get involved please contact Dave.Wall@ulsterwildlife.org

Coastwatch – Highlighting the Dangers of Balloon Releases

On 16th February Trinity College Dublin became the first university in Ireland to prohibit balloon releases on college property. This is a result of the work by a local Coastwatch group which raised awareness of balloon releases as a form of litter and how they can cause harm to wildlife including sea turtles, birds and cetaceans. This was announced on the first day of college Green Week and was marked by blowing bubbles in front square, displays showing how balloon fun turns into harmful waste and a scientific evidence note on the college Green pages website. Coastwatch wishes to

thank the Marine Conservation Society for sharing their campaign material.

Surfers Against Sewage On-going Campaigns to Tackle Marine Litter



The impressive winter storms have left an ugly plastic scar across the Northern Ireland Coastline. To rise to this challenge Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) have increased the volunteer reps in Northern Ireland from two to four and have hit the sand with the SAS Big Spring Beach Clean which ran from 11-17th April with events around the coast from Derry to Ballyhornan.

This is one of the largest beach clean campaigns in the UK and one of many opportunities to engage with SAS throughout the year. Our representatives will be visiting coastal communities, working on education events, campaigns and raising much needed funds to help the charity deliver these great activities. [Visit the SAS website for more details](#)

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Marine Litter Action Network (MLAN)

The Network had its second annual networking workshop event on 25th and 26th May in Birmingham with 35 delegates from 28 organisations attending. The delegates discussed: financial incentives and behaviour change; tackling litter at sporting events; beach cleans - maximising take up; litter recycling, and litter monitoring methods in estuaries. A report covering all sessions and next steps will be out soon!

A film "A Year Can make a Difference" which reports on the first year of the MLAN is available from <https://vimeo.com/133148310>

The Network is expanding with the Marine Conservation Society acting as a hub. An interesting new project is the Circular Ocean project led by the Environmental Research Institute of the North Highland College with partners in Ireland, England, Greenland and Norway. The project seeks to collect and reprocess discarded fishing nets, illustrating the linkages between the concept of the circular economy and marine litter. Please see: <http://www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/27069/how-to-handle-fishing-gear-responsibly/>

Celtic Seas Partnership Update

The WWF-led EU Celtic Sea Partnership project, reported on previously in Marine Litter Watch, has completed its second round of 6 country workshops across the Celtic Seas Region of North-West Europe.

These events brought together government representatives with a wide range of marine stakeholders to discuss and develop ways of working together to help deliver the EU target of 'Good Environmental Status' for EU seas by 2020, measured against 11 indicators or 'descriptors,' including levels of marine litter.

Discussions at the workshops focused particularly on future trends in the Celtic Seas and delegates were also updated on details of a pilot project to involve Eco-Schools in actions to promote awareness, prevention and reduction of marine litter.

World Animal Protection Global Ghost Gear Initiative

At the end of 2015 partners from the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) held a fact finding mission at Swansea marina to learn more about how the GGGI is working collaboratively with

a range of stakeholders from local fishermen up to the global seafood industry to tackle the issue. They were joined by local MPs, Shadow Defra Secretary of State Kerry McCarthy, Youngs Seafood and representatives from the Welsh Fishermen's Association. The tour highlighted some specific challenges and low-tech solutions that fishermen can use to adapt their gear to limit the long term impact of lost gear on the environment.

On board the fishing vessel of Sea Change Champion, Nigel Sanders, participants were shown modifications such as quick degrading screws on whelk pots and degradable rings that release the door of a pot should it be lost, enabling trapped sea life, such as crabs, to escape.



Global ghost gear initiative partners at Swansea marina

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Love Your Lough

by Olivia and Shay

Love Your Lough is a local grass roots team of volunteers from all over the Carlingford Lough community and beyond. Up and running just over one year their objective is to help Promote, Protect and Preserve Carlingford Lough including all of its flora and fauna.

Importance of Carlingford Lough

Carlingford Lough located on the east coast of Ireland is the most beautiful, natural asset in this area. The Lough unconditionally enriches the lives of this community in so many different ways. It provides endless hours of joy for those who live and visit the Lough. It is a natural habitat for so many different species of sea & wildlife including the protected Brent Geese who migrate here in the winter months. Steeped in myths and legends with prehistoric and historic sites dotted along its shores, it truly is a magical place.

Pollution

Unfortunately litter pollution around the Lough is prevalent and is a threat to the flora, fauna and ultimately ourselves. This pollution is a result of many contributing factors from both society



and coastal industries. We are looking forward to working with DAERA and coastal industries to ensure that best environmental practices are adopted.

Amazing Volunteer Network

Throughout the year the LYL team organise many clean up events targeting the most polluted areas of the Lough. An amazing network of volunteers from all across the Lough community, from Greenore to Cranfield give up their precious time to lend a helping hand at these events. 2 Minute Beach Cleans, tree planting, upcycling of marine litter, reduction in single use plastics,

[Love your Lough volunteers](#)

recycling of materials, Lough wildlife and nature seminars are all initiatives that the LYL team are actively involved in promoting and organising within this Lough community.

If you wish to find out more and get involved with LYL please [check out our Facebook page](#) or [get in touch via email!](#)

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Fishing for Litter 2 Years On

by Kevin Quigley, NIFHA Chief Executive. Contact: kevin.quigley@nifha.co.uk

Here at the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA) we view the Fishing for Litter scheme as an essential part of our programme to help deliver sustainable fisheries into the future. Originally launched in Ardglass our other two harbours have now joined the scheme.



First 3 bags landed at Portavogie; ironically a litter bin was one of the items trawled up.

Type of Litter

All three harbours regularly collect waste trawled up from the sea. Some of what comes in can both surprise and shock as the photo of a bin shows. Over time we have seen an increasing commitment

to the scheme from the local Fishermen in all three harbours with fishing vessels of all sizes represented. The project is led in NIFHA by the Ardglass harbour master John Smyth. His unwavering enthusiasm and hard work have ensured that Fishing for Litter has moved from something it would be good to do someday to a mainstream activity of the Authority. Essential to our success has been the enthusiastic support of the Department of the Environment, now the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Our Goals

Here at NIFHA we are keenly aware that any project like the Fishing for Litter scheme works to achieve two key goals. The first is to make a real impact now in improving the environment. The second and equally important is about changing culture and without doubt this scheme is having a positive impact.

Commitment to Shaping the Future

But we are not about to rest. The future is about reaching today's children. With the support of the National lottery,



A game from NIFHA's primary school education programme

NIFHA has developed a five module programme directed at local primary 6 children called "Happy Harbours". This is a highly interactive programme including core learning games and an art competition. It finishes with tour of their local harbour by the children including an opportunity to get their hands wet in our very own touch tank.

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Foyle Ambassadors

by Gillian Simpson, Information Services Officer. Contact: Gillian.Simpson@loughs-agency.org



The Foyle Ambassadors and the fruits of their clean-up efforts

21 Foyle Ambassadors from Derry~Londonderry and Donegal graduated recently after completing a 10 week programme funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Loughs Agency, co-ordinated through Co-operation Ireland. During the programme the Ambassadors undertook a range of activities exploring the Foyle, its tributaries and coastline. One of the aims of the programme was to get young people engaged in hands on environmental activities that improved the area for wildlife and people.

Micro litter clean up

Foyle Ambassadors completed 2 clean ups during the 10 week programme

including a micro clean up at Benone Beach where they were challenged to find and collect smaller items of litter. This encouraged our volunteers to take a closer look at litter which wouldn't necessarily catch the eye at first glance. They found cigarette butts, ice cream sticks, spoons, bottle tops and soon realised that a lot of the litter originated from the very people that use the beach for recreation. With group leaders they talked about the damage the litter could do to visitors, pets and wildlife.

Weirdest Find

A second clean up took place along the shores of Lough Foyle. Here, larger items were discovered along the high tide mark. They collected two jeep loads of rubbish in less than 3 hours! Everyone was shocked at the debris they were finding. It included all sorts



This strange little plastic toy won the most unusual find during one of the shore line clean ups

of rubbish, both commercial and domestic. We even had a prize for the weirdest find! Do you know what it is? Our ambassadors found the task quite difficult (and smelly!) but felt really rewarded when they piled everything up that they had lifted.

Importance of Conservation

The conservation activities really helped the ambassadors with the 'conserve' aspect of their John Muir Award as they understood the importance of conserving and protecting the habitats and landscapes that they had been enjoying during their activities.

Video

You can watch a short video which captured the journey of the Ambassadors over the duration of the programme on [our Youtube channel – Loughs Agency TV.](#)

2016 Programmes

Loughs Agency, with the support of Heritage Lottery Funding, will be running 2 more programmes in 2016.

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A regional sea action plan approach to tackling marine litter

by Sandy Cruickshank. Marine Programme Manager - Defra. Contact: Sandy.Cruickshank@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Marine litter can be defined as any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of, abandoned or lost that enters the marine and coastal environment. Much of it comes from terrestrial sources. Avoiding littering and inappropriate disposal of material at source on land and sea is the best way to reduce the amount of debris getting into the environment.

Cross-sectoral approach

Tackling litter generally can be best achieved by all sectors, including Governments working together to identify practical solutions and raising public awareness of the impact of litter on the whole environment, including beaches and the open oceans.

Transient Problem

Wind, current and tidal systems make marine litter a very transient problem, increasing the difficulty in identifying sources at a global, regional sea, national or local level.

Due to the transient nature of marine litter, the UK and our neighbouring

countries have agreed that a collaborative approach is the best way to address this issue. The UK's Marine Strategy sets out our overarching approach to marine litter and includes a monitoring programme and a programme of measures.

OSPAR Regional Action Plan

This collaborative approach is being taken forward through the implementation of a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP-ML) that was agreed by the OSPAR Convention in June 2014. The name "OSPAR" derives from a combination of the Oslo and Paris Conventions on the prevention of marine pollution.

Working together to address marine litter

The RAP-ML includes a range of actions that countries are taking forward together and individually. The actions involve a range of sectors including fishing, shipping, ports, manufacturing, retailing and other terrestrial activities. There is a broad range of actions including those aimed at; extending good practice in the fishing industry,



reducing waste, increasing recycling, removing microplastic beads from cosmetic products as well as the encouragement of business and individual behaviour change. Progress is being made on many of the actions.

Key Diary Dates

What's coming up in the marine world in 2016...

16 – 19 June

Portaferry Sails & Sounds Festival

<http://www.portaferrysailsandsounds.co.uk/>

25-26 June

Irish Game Fair – Shanes Castle, Antrim

<http://www.irishgamefair.com/>

Keep Northern Ireland beautiful are seeking volunteers for this event. Please contact nicola.fitzsimons@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

1 July

Seashore Scavenge at Glenarm

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team, Glenarm Wildlife Group and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust for a seashore scavenge at Glenarm, Co. Antrim. For more information: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

6 July

Humpback Hunt at Torr Head

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group for a guided watch for whales, dolphins and porpoises at Torr Head, Co. Antrim. For more information: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

9-17 July

Foyle Maritime Festival

Stopover of the Clipper Race 2015-16

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Things-To-Do/Whats-On/Foyle-Maritime-Festival>

16 July

Guided Whalewatch at Portrush

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group for a guided watch for whales, dolphins, porpoises and basking sharks at Ramore Head, Co. Antrim. For more information: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

16-17 July 2016

Dalriada Festival

<http://www.dalriadafestival.co.uk/>

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful are seeking volunteers for this event. Please contact nicola.fitzsimons@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

18 July

Shoreline Scavenge at Ballygally

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for a seashore scavenge at Ballygally, Co. Antrim. For more information: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

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Key Diary Dates

What's coming up in the marine world in 2016...

24-30 July

Red Sails Festival Portstewart

<http://redsails.co.uk/>

25-30th July

Skifflewoods Coastal Rowing Festival

Coastal rowing festival – Strangford Lough

<http://scottishcoastalrowing.org/2015/06/04/skiffieworlds-25-to-30-july-2016-to-be-held-in-strangford-lough/>

26 July

Snorkel Safari – Portrush

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team for a snorkelling safari at Portrush, Co. Antrim. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

27 July

Rockpool Ramble, Ballintoy Harbour

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust for a rockpool ramble at Ballintoy Harbour, Co. Antrim. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

28 July

Snorkel Safari, Red Bay

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team, Glenarm Wildlife Group and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust for a snorkelling safari at Red Bay, Co. Antrim. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

31 July

Coastal Foraging, Dundrum

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and Forage Ireland for coastal foraging at Dundrum, Co. Down. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

1 August

Eco-Coasteering

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and Causeway Coasteering for an eco-coasteering adventure at Dunseverick, Co Antrim. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

2 August

Snorkel Safari – Groomsport

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team for a snorkelling safari at Groomsport, Co. Down. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

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What's coming up in the marine world in 2016...

2-3 August

Fermanagh County Show

<http://www.fermanaghmagh.com/event/fermanagh-county-show-enniskillen/>

Keep Northern Ireland are seeking volunteers for this event. Please contact nicola.fitzsimons@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

6 – 14 August

Donaghadee Summer Festival

<http://www.visitdonaghadee.com/whatson.htm>

9 August

Snorkel Safari – Cranfield Beach

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team for a snorkelling safari at Cranfield Beach, Co. Down. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

14 August

Rockpool Ramble, Cushendall

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust for a rockpool ramble at Cushendall, Co. Antrim. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

16 August

Snorkel Safari – Killough

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team for a snorkelling safari at Killough, Co. Down. For more info & to book: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

27 August

Whalewatch Ireland, Bloody Bridge

Join Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team and the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group for a guided watch for whales, dolphins and porpoises at Bloody Bridge, Co. Down. For more information: <http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on>

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