

Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter
Issue 09 - Spring 2017



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter
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Hello & Welcome

by Susan Cramer, Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

Welcome to the Spring 2017 edition of Marine Litter Watch.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed by sending articles, news and updates. It is always inspirational to learn about the range of measures that people are taking to address the problem of marine litter pollution.

Thank you also to Gary Burrows from DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division who provided our cover image of West Light at the Maidens. Gary also provided the image opposite of his daughter, Sophie, using an improvised tray to remove rubbish from a beach as part of a family beach clean.



Already 2017 is flying by and the signs of Spring are beginning to show. That means it is time for the Live Here Love Here Big Spring Clean!

During the month of April you can take action to combat the litter that blights our beaches, waterways, towns and countryside. Join the 107,000 volunteers who got involved in

clean-ups during 2016 and removed a staggering 298 tonnes of litter and make this year even BIGGER.

Do you know a grot spot or a beach that could do with a good clean? Then visit www.livehereandlovehere.org or call 02890736920 and register your clean up to receive a FREE clean up kit to help with your event!



Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

continued

Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter
Issue 09 - Spring 2017

Hello & Welcome *continued*



Were you inspired by the article in the last edition of Marine Litter Watch by Kate Wilson from the Marine Conservation Society who took the Plastic Challenge in 2016? If so, you will be pleased to learn that the Marine Conservation Society plans to repeat the Plastic Challenge in 2017 during the month of June. For details on how to be involved please see <http://www.mcsuk.org/plasticchallenge/>

Article Summary

This edition focuses on the practical and creative steps that people are taking to address the problem of marine litter. The magazine opens with an article by **Rosie Watkins** on how her group of dedicated

volunteers are helping to ensure that the unique environment of Whitehouse Lagoon is being protected from the litter pollution.

John Smyth, the Ardglass Harbour Master, describes how an encounter at a conference resulted in almost 200 nets from Northern Ireland being shipped to Denmark for recycling.

Jennifer Firth, from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, reports on her work with volunteers who collect data

quarterly from 10 beaches in Northern Ireland. The data is used to report litter levels to the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic.

Marine litter comes in all shapes and sizes and unfortunately is found on beaches, the water column and sea bed. In our second article on data collection, **Mike McAliskey** gives us a flavour of how we are collecting data on the differing types of litter.



Fishing for Litter skip ready for collection in Kilkeel

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)



News

Environmental Audit Committee probe environmental damage of drinks packaging

The House of Commons, [Environmental Audit Committee](#), has begun an inquiry into the damage being done to the environment by disposable drinks packaging. The inquiry will focus on the impact of plastic bottles and coffee cups.

Cardboard coffee cups are a particular problem; an estimated 7 million are discarded every day but on average only 1 in 400 is recycled. This is because they are fused with polyethylene to make them waterproof. However, only 2 sites in the UK have the capacity to separate this coating.

The Committee will look at what actions are being undertaken by industry and Government to reduce this type of waste and will investigate possible solutions.

The Committee is seeking written submissions by **5pm, Wednesday 5 April 2017.**

Got 2 Minutes? Pick it, Bag it, Snap it, and Tag it!

The Love Your Lough team along with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Carlingford Tidy Towns worked together to launch the #2minutebeachclean initiative in Carlingford Lough. The #2minutebeachclean is a simple concept. If you are out and about on the beach why not take 2 minutes and do your own beach clean-up? Every piece of litter removed from the beach matters. Each and every piece of plastic removed from the marine environment is no longer a danger to the animals that live there. It won't break down into micro plastics, strangle seabirds or mammals or end up being ingested.



#2minutebeachclean volunteers

Beach Clean Stations

A number of #2minutebeachclean stations have been located around Carlingford Lough. They provide litter pickers and bags for the public to use for their clean up. When done, snap a photo of the rubbish collected and post it to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, tagging it with #2minutebeachclean. Through these social media sites, you will be joining a band of other beach lovers from across the globe in showing how you are protecting our marine life and oceans. Everyone has 2 minutes. You'll be surprised what a difference you can make!

Development of international water industry position statement on non-flushable and 'flushable' labelled products

This statement has been developed to prevent problems with sewer, pipe and toilet blockages. It will also raise awareness about the human and environmental costs of sewer flooding and the pollution that this can cause. Organisations, such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency have

continued

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

Updates

[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse

[Read More...](#)

The Net Value

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring

Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

signed up to the statement and agree that:

- Only the 3Ps – Pee, Poo and toilet Paper – should be flushed;
- Currently, all wipes and personal hygiene products should be clearly marked as “Do Not Flush” and disposed of in the bin;
- Wipes labelled “Flushable” based on passing a manufacturers’ trade association guidance document should be labelled “Do Not Flush” until there is a standard agreed by the water and wastewater industry;
- Manufacturers of wipes and personal hygiene products should give consumers clear and unambiguous information about appropriate disposal methods.

Looking to the Future

Looking to the future, new innovations in materials might make it possible for certain products to be flushed, if they pass a technical standard which has been developed and agreed by the water and wastewater industry. Preferably this standard would be developed under the banner of the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Key requirements for any standard include that the product:

- a) Does not contain plastic or regenerated cellulose and only contains materials which will readily degrade in a range of natural environments.
- b) Breaks into small pieces quickly;
- c) Must not be buoyant;

As of 6th December 2016, 23 countries and 302 organisations have supported the statement. Further details can be viewed at [wet wipes and flushability position statement](#)

Updates

Ban on the use of microbeads consultation closes

Thank you to everyone who responded to the consultation on proposals to ban the use of microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products in the UK.

The consultation closed on 28th February and we are considering your views. DAERA intends bringing forward legislation under Article 32 of the Waste and Contaminated

Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 to establish the ban in Northern Ireland. We anticipate that this will be consulted on later in 2017. We are working closely with our colleagues in Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government to coordinate our approach.



Image of microbeads courtesy of the Alliance of the Great lakes

Good News for the Environment

The ban, which is good news for the environment, would apply to solid microplastic ingredients <5mm in size in every dimension that are used as ingredients in rinse-off cosmetics and personal care products including, exfoliating scrubs, shower gels and toothpastes.

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

Updates

[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse

[Read More...](#)

The Net Value

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring

Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter
Issue 09 - Spring 2017

Updates *continued*

Consultation on a ban on microbeads in Southern Ireland

We also welcome the [public consultation](#) on the proposal to legislate to prohibit microbeads in certain products in southern Ireland. The consultation launched on 16 February and closes on 24 March 2017.

Ulster Wildlife Living Seas Team

In the last edition of Marine Litter Watch, Dave Wall gave a flavour of some of the projects the Ulster Wildlife Living Seas Team had been involved in. During 2016 the Team worked with the community, local authority and community partners to complete 8 beach cleans and removed 308 bags of litter and several trailer loads of other junk from the shores around Northern Ireland

Litter Pick for Marine Week

On the 29 July, and again on 23 November workers from AES Kilroot Power Station, the Ulster Wildlife Living Seas Team, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Mid and East Antrim

Council and local residents, to tackle the litter problem on the Kilroot shore.

The amount of litter removed during 2016 is a staggering 240 bags and we're still only about half way there in terms of clearing the beach of litter. New material is continually arriving on the shore.



Kilroot Beach Clean April 16

Marine Conservation Society Wet Wipes Turn Nasty When You Flush Them Campaign

As a result of the [MCS campaign](#) and your support, all the main high street retailers in the UK have either removed or made a commitment to no longer use plastics in their "flushable" wipes. The campaign also resulted in Under Secretary of State, Therese Coffey, hosting a

meeting in early December 2016 with leading manufacturers, retailers and water companies. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss actions companies can take in 2017. The need for action is real with MCS's Great British Beach Clean 2016 report, showing that wet wipes have increased by a colossal 700% in a decade. You can show your support for clearer labelling by signing the MCS petition at <http://bit.ly/280OZjH>



Toilet Monster

Hello & Welcome [Read More...](#)

News [Read More...](#)

Updates [Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse [Read More...](#)

The Net Value Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority [Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful [Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring Marine and Fisheries Division [Read More...](#)



Updates continued

Celtic Seas Partnership

Over the last 4 years the WWF-UK led, EU funded, Celtic Seas Partnership (CSP) project has been developing innovative and collaborative ways of working to improve the management of our seas.

During the course of the project CSP has held 30 national and 3 multinational workshops, engaging with more than 1,500 stakeholders. It has also produced a number of products to support better management of the Celtic Seas. You can find all of the products and workshop reports on the website <http://celticseaspartnership.eu/>

Future Trends

The CSP looked at what the next 20 years could hold for the Celtic Seas. Using three different scenarios, it considered the impact on our economy, environment and well-being, and what this means for how we manage our seas. The Future Trends interactive website gives you the opportunity to explore the

key findings of the study <http://futuretrends.celticseaspartnership.eu/>

Good Practice Guidelines

The CSP also produced good practice guidelines based on a number of case studies from across the Celtic Seas:

- [Positive interaction and preventing conflicts between marine stakeholders](#)
- [Harmonious co-existence of marine renewables with other marine uses and interests](#)
- [Effective marine management & decision-making across borders](#)

Marine Litter

The CSP Marine Litter group brought together the Eco-schools operators for Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England to produce a funding proposal for a pilot Eco-schools project on marine litter. If successful in securing leadership and funding this would embed marine litter into the Eco-schools curriculum.

If you would like more information on this or any other aspect of the project please contact csp@wwf.org.uk



Dredger in the Bay

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)



Updates continued

Best practice framework for the management of fishing gear

A best practice framework, covering the management of fishing gear throughout all stages of its life, has been drafted by participants of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), a cross-sectoral alliance launched by World Animal Protection in 2015. The framework will have a formal launch in June 2017.

Guidance

It covers guidance for policy makers and all parties within the seafood supply chain on issues such as gear management, gear marking and reception facilities. This is to mitigate the risks of gear loss and ghost fishing. It also includes best practice case studies from around the world, focusing on different gear types and operating environments to provide practical guidance for different fisheries.

Successful Circular Ocean #Net_Hack_Challenge workshop at the Centre for Sustainable Design

Circular Ocean is a transnational European project which aims to help turn waste plastic from the sea into a useful resource. The project held an eco-innovation workshop, the #Net_Hack_Challenge, involving waste fishing nets and ropes in Farnham. It was led by Professor Martin Charter, the founder of the Centre for Sustainable Design. Participants worked through eight challenges which encouraged the development of solutions surrounding the re-use, re-purposing and recycling of waste fishing nets and ropes.

Development of innovative products

Participants included 30 craft and design postgraduate students at the University of Creative Arts who were tasked with developing an innovative product from a selection of waste fishing nets and ropes. This was then pitched to of a panel of experts who provided feedback. Critical to the solutions was that they were

re-utilising waste materials. A number of creative ideas and inventive concepts were generated including; lighting design concepts, football goals, benches made from lobster pots, outdoor cushions and much more.

Further workshop

Lessons learned from the workshop will be used to steer a further workshop during 2017 in Iceland.

For more information about the Circular Ocean contact info@circularocean.eu



Sea Change Net Recycling

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

Updates

[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse

[Read More...](#)

The Net Value

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring

Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse *by Rosie Watkins, Volunteer*

Contact: whitehousetagoon@gmail.com



Whitehouse Lagoon

Whitehouse Lagoon, just north of Belfast, is one of only 30 saline lagoons in Northern Ireland. It was formed in 1980 when the M5 was constructed, cutting Whitehouse Strand off from the Belfast Lough. Six sluices pass under the M5 and these cause a time lag of about two hours between high and low tide in the lagoon and the Lough.

Wildlife

Overwintering birds appreciate this, as mudflats are exposed at different times. The Glas-na-Braden river brings in fresh water, contributing to the brackish water profile that

characterises a saline lagoon. The lagoon is a designated Area of Special Scientific Interest.

Volunteers

Since 2014 a small group of volunteers has made a concerted effort to remove litter from the lagoon shore. Once in the lagoon, the litter circulates and builds up, creating a hazard to the birds and spoiling the amenity value of this special habitat. Most of the litter appears to come from the stream and the adjacent park. The sluices provide a barrier against all but the smallest objects which may be in the Lough.

Litter Surveys

Several litter surveys have been conducted on the Gideon's Green shore. We have found that on average about 82% of the litter is plastic, followed by sanitary waste at 14%. Sanitary waste is very high in comparison with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's Marine Litter Survey results where it is typically 4-5%.



Next Steps

Large objects indicate that there is dumping in the lagoon and the stream. We have found shopping trolleys, large items of furniture, children's buggies, tyres, gas cylinders, pallets and numerous glass and plastic bottles. Our next step is to try to identify the main litter sources in the hope of reducing the volume entering the lagoon.

Check out the Lagoon's Facebook page (Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse) or email whitehousetagoon@gmail.com if you are interested in joining us.

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value *by John Smyth, Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority*

Contact: john.smyth@nifha.co.uk

The fishing industry accumulates a lot of old netting, which can be seen lying at many harbours. The cost of disposal (normally to landfill) is high.

Viable method of recycling

I was looking for viable method of recycling the nets and whilst attending a course in Edinburgh I met Harry Owen from Newhaven, England who was involved with a Danish company called Plastix Global, recycling old fishing nets.

Visitors from Denmark

We arranged for representatives from Plastix Global to visit our fishing harbours (Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie), where they saw what was available. We discussed the types and amounts of netting, logistics and time frame involved. The nets used at the fishing ports mainly consist of bottom trawl nets which are made from polyethylene and there were also some other pelagic (mid water) fishing nets made from nylon.

Containers Arrive

It was agreed that Plastix Global would send over 3 containers from Denmark which would be left on trailers at the harbours for filling. The containers were the open topped type with a tarpaulin stretched over the top. We already have a system at the harbours where nets are tagged with a disposal date, giving owners time to remove good nets so only unwanted nets were recycled. The containers were filled by Harbour staff with the aid of hired teleporters. Approximately 200 nets in total were sent for recycling.



Fishing nets for recycling in Ardglass

Cost of disposal

There was no cost for the disposal of the nets to the fishermen and the cost of transporting the nets was met by Plastix Global. Some nets retrieved through the Fishing for Litter Scheme were also sent for recycling.

What has become of the nets?

The nets were duly sent to Denmark and will be processed into pellets for reuse in manufacturing, and even made into Lego! I am looking forward to feedback from Denmark and hope we can continue the scheme.

Looking Forward

I would like to see a more joined up recycling process where litter removed by the Fishing for Litter Scheme, Beach Cleans and 'end of life' nets can, where appropriate, be sent to a local recycler for reuse.

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey *by Jennifer Firth, Local Environmental Quality Surveyor, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful*

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Every year Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful co-ordinates a total of 40 marine litter surveys on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. The surveys take place across 10 Northern Ireland beaches from Runkerry to Rostrevor. The surveys give an overall estimate of the abundance of litter washing up on our beaches. The results are then reported to the OSPAR Commission which collects marine litter data from fifteen countries from Norway to Portugal in order to co-ordinate and help estimate the impacts of litter on the marine environment of the North East Atlantic.

February 2017 Marine Litter Survey

In February, we published the Marine Litter Survey Report covering all of the data collected from September 2012 to December 2016. The data shows that 70 – 80% of items are forms of plastic, with plastic and

polystyrene fragments and food and drinks packaging the most common types of litter found. Bits of metal and wood together make up another 10% of all the litter found – items like old radios and car parts which are discarded are litter just the same as beer tins. Sewage Related Debris (SRD), cloth, glass and paper make up the remainder.

Variable Litter Levels

Overall, litter levels are very variable on our beaches, but there is slightly less than in other countries within

the OSPAR area. There has been no significant decrease in the amount of litter observed since 2012.

View the data online

All of the data collected in Northern Ireland since 2012 has now been placed online, and can be downloaded from www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org. There are online tools to view and examine the data developed by Detail Data (a Big Lottery funded partnership between NICVA and TheDetail.tv).



continued

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)



2016 Marine Litter Survey - continued

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Work of dedicated volunteers

We could not collect all of this data without our dedicated volunteers. To carry out a marine litter survey, our volunteers require some training so it's a big commitment. However, it is a great opportunity to learn new skills and spend time on our beautiful

beaches. At present we have 4 Marine Litter Survey Volunteers and we would love this team to grow. If you would like to volunteer with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Marine Litter Survey Team, please contact us at enquiries@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org



Live Here Love Here

Under the Live Here Love Here Programme, our volunteers also carry out clean ups at every beach surveyed to ensure we are not re-counting litter during the next survey. Almost 2,500 people brave the elements and devote almost 5,500 hours to help us improve the state of our seas and coastline. During 2016 over 4,000 kg of litter was removed by these dedicated people, that is 4,000 kg less litter which can cause harm to wildlife and pollute our seas. If you would like to register as a volunteer for clean ups, please visit www.liveherelovehere.org where you can get involved in a wide variety of activities.

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring *by Michael McAliskey, DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division*

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Marine litter on the shoreline

DAERA and its predecessors have monitored marine litter for several years now in order to assess the pressure and to address Descriptor 10 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

Marine litter on the shoreline

Marine litter is predominately plastic which accounts for around 80% of the items found on beaches in the North Atlantic. A similar abundance of plastic is reported from sampling at the

sea surface and on the seabed. The majority of traceable items originate from land-based sources, such as public littering.

Durability of plastics

Most plastics are extremely durable materials and persist in the marine environment for a considerable period, possibly as much as hundreds of years. However, plastics also deteriorate and fragment in the environment as a consequence of exposure to sunlight (photo-degradation) in addition to physical and chemical deterioration. This breakdown of larger items results in numerous tiny plastic fragments, which, when smaller than 5mm are called micro plastics.

Northern Ireland Monitoring

In Northern Ireland, monitoring of beach and seabed litter is much more advanced than monitoring of micro plastics. The first UK summaries of data collected since 2012 will be

consulted on later in 2017 as part of the first revision of the MSFD Initial Assessment.



Floating marine litter, most of which ends up on either the coast or the seabed.

Micro plastics

Micro plastic particles, smaller than 5 mm in size are of increasing concern, especially in aquatic environments. Primary source micro plastics are micro beads (<5 mm) used in cosmetics and cleaning agents and

continued

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

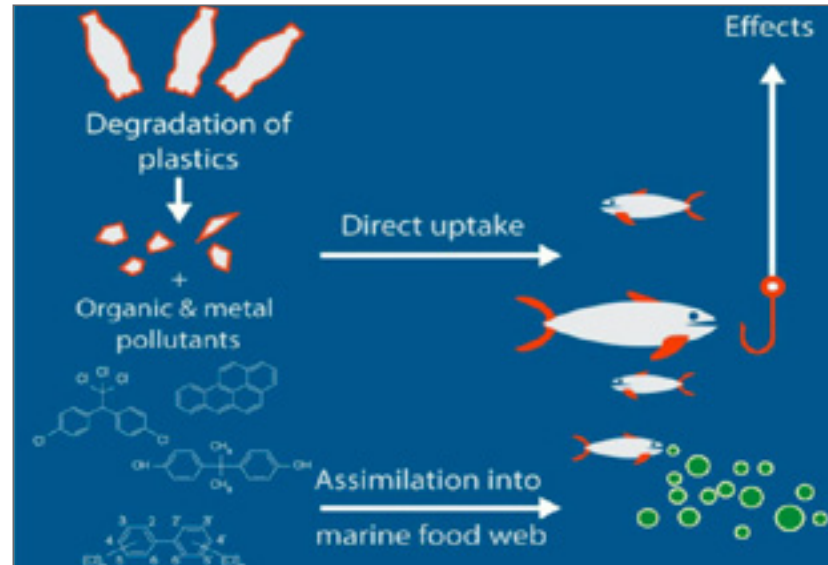
2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring continued

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fibre fragments from washing of clothes. Secondary source micro plastics are broken down plastic litter. These can be ingested by diverse marine fauna, including zooplankton, mussels, oysters, prawns, fish etc. and can enter the human food chain. Research studies are now focussed on investigating whether consumption of plastic debris by marine organisms translates into toxic exposures for people who consume seafood, with particular relevance to plasticisers, flame retardants and heavy metals.



Some implications of the degradation of micro plastic litter contamination.

Marine Litter Monitoring

In order to be able to assess the impact of marine litter it is necessary for government to undertake monitoring of litter in three marine compartments: beach litter, seabed litter and micro plastic litter in water, sediment or biota (fish/shellfish). These indicators give information on the amount, type and trends of litter in the marine environment.

Advantages of our approach

Volunteer led beach cleans and litter surveys facilitate the removal of large quantities of litter from the marine and coastal environments. They can also reduce the cost of sampling and enhance public awareness of environmental issues and generate insightful data.

Way forward

Ultimately though, the most efficacious and economic solution is to minimise and eventually prevent the release of litter into the marine environment. This can be done by reducing our consumption and inappropriate disposal of synthetic and persistent materials, such as plastic.

Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)



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Hello & Welcome
[Read More...](#)

News
[Read More...](#)

Updates
[Read More...](#)

Love the Lagoon at Whitehouse
[Read More...](#)

The Net Value
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority
[Read More...](#)

2016 Marine Litter Survey
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Monitoring
Marine and Fisheries Division
[Read More...](#)