

Marine Litter Watch >



Newsletter
Issue 06 - Autumn 2015

Marine Litter Watch

Hello & Welcome

by Susan Cramer, Marine Division, DOE

Welcome to the autumn 2015 edition of Marine Litter Watch. Thank you to everyone who has contributed by sending in articles and images.

Summer is over (what summer I hear you say) and I hope you enjoyed the events listed in the last edition of Marine Litter Watch.

People on the north coast were fortunate to enjoy exceptional views of harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphins and basking sharks almost daily throughout the month of August. The image on the right was taken by Gary Burrows, Marine Division's North Coast Ranger and shows a basking shark very close to the coast off West Bay, Portrush. For more information please see www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-34078099

Bathing Water Quality

The bathing season which is from 1 June to 15 September is now closed. Marine Division were delighted that all



Basking Shark off West Bay, Portrush.

23 of Northern Ireland's identified bathing waters met the new, tighter standards which came into effect across Europe in 2015. Northern Ireland's bathing waters have continued to perform well and are on a par with the best in Europe for bathing water quality.

Article Summary

This edition has a strong focus on the activities which individuals and groups are undertaking to help address the problem of marine litter.

Tracey McKane leads with an article on the "2 minute beach clean". This article highlights the practical steps all beach users can take to help address marine litter.

Andy Cummings describes the actions that the charity Surfers Against Sewage is taking to address marine litter.

Claire Goodwin and Charmaine Beer report on the contribution that the diving community is making through the Seasearch programme and describe the types of litter recovered from the relatively shallow inshore waters close to populated areas.

Mike McAliskey from DOE Marine Division describes the implications of marine litter. In particular the harm that it causes to marine life, and how toxins can be bio-magnified up the food chain and adhere to the surface of floating plastics.

If you have an event you'd like to publicise or would like to contribute an article, idea or photograph for the next edition of the Marine Litter Watch, please email us: marineteam@doeni.gov.uk

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

News

Great Northern Irish Beach Clean

Our cover picture was taken on 18th September 2015 when the DOE Minister, Mark H Durkan, joined volunteers from DOE Marine Division, Derry City and Strabane District Council, the Loughs Agency and their Maritime Ambassadors, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the Foyle Yacht Club and private individuals to clean up the beach at Culmore Point. The event was part of the Marine Conservation Great Northern Irish Beach Clean. Minister Durkan said, "Today's beach clean was all about working together to address the problem of marine litter."



Minister Mark H Durkan and volunteers who participated in the Great Northern Irish Beach Clean at Culmore Point.

Portavogie joins Fishing for Litter scheme



NIFHA launches the Fishing for Litter scheme in Portavogie.

On 11 September 2015 Portavogie joined Ardglass and Kilkeel in the NI Fishing for Litter scheme. All the ports managed by the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority are now participating in the scheme. Thanks to the efforts of NIFHA and local fishermen, a total of 127 boats are taking part and over 20 tonnes of litter have been landed since the scheme began in February 2014.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine Litter

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in cooperation with the Open University of the Netherlands, has launched a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Marine Litter. The MOOC

has been created in order to stimulate leadership. It offers opportunities for actionable and change oriented learning related to marine litter within the framework of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter. The course dates are 14 October – 22 December 2015.

Please see http://unep.org/training/docs/Marine_Litter_Mooc.pdf

<https://www.marinelittermooc.org/learn/massive-open-online-course-mooc-on-marine-litter-october-2015>

Celtic Seas Partnership

The last edition of Marine Litter Watch featured an article by Geoff Nuttall from the Celtic Seas Partnership (CSP). The CSP held its second country workshop in



Panel discussion at CSP Paris Workshop.

[continue reading News](#) ➤

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

News continued

Paris in May 2015. It featured a panel session with representatives from the French, Irish and UK governments, the Scottish Coastal Forum and Seascope Consultants. It also included updates from the task groups which are based around a number of MSFD descriptors including marine litter. Please see <http://celticseaspartnership.eu/blog/successful-workshop-paris/>

The Northern Ireland country workshop took place on 1 October at the Harbour Commissioners Office, Belfast. The workshop explored what the future holds for the Celtic Seas, will growth, or a lack of growth in particular marine sectors have an impact on how our seas are managed and what tools, mechanisms and resources can we develop together to meet the marine challenges of the future? Please contact Geoff Nuttall for additional information gnuttall@wwf.org.uk

World Animal Protection launch of Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI)

Experts from around the world met in London on 10 September to launch the GGGI. This is a cross-sectoral approach to tackling end of life and lost fishing gear - a first of its kind bringing together

the expertise to drive solutions, build evidence and share best practice at a global scale. Mostly made of plastic with a life expectancy of up to 600 years, ghost gear accumulates in our oceans at an estimated rate of 640,000 tonnes per year or one tonne of ghost gear per 125 tonnes of fish caught. This causes huge devastation to marine habitats as it continues to catch, entangle and kill hundreds of species including seals, turtles, dolphins and whales.

Please contact Christina Dixon for further information ChristinaDixon@worldanimalprotection.org.uk

Publications

Northern Ireland Marine Litter Report

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful launched the Northern Ireland Marine Litter Report on 21 August 2015. The report showed an average of 5,332 items of litter were observed on 14 survey beaches during 2014. A total of 3,000 hours were volunteered by people keen to improve their local beach and protect its wildlife, which resulted in almost 15.5 tonnes of litter being removed.

Chris Allen, author of the Report, commented, "Winter storms dumped tonnes of litter onto some beaches overnight, suggesting there is a huge reservoir of litter already in the sea, and we are just adding to it. We must come to terms with the damage we are doing to our own health and prosperity by dropping litter."

The Report is available from: www.tidynorthernireland.org/uploads/documents/Marine%20Litter/2014/Marine%20Litter%20Survey%202014%20A4.pdf



[continue reading News](#) ➤

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

News continued

Coastwatch Marine Litter Report

The results of the Coastwatch 2014 all Ireland litter survey are available on the Coastwatch website www.coastwatch.org. Over 2,000 volunteers took part in the survey which covered 501 sites in southern Ireland and 100 in the north. The survey data indicated that tyres were the most frequently observed items of large litter on the coast here while land fill items were the large litter items found in the south. Drinks bottles are the most common type of litter north and south. The 2014 Report is available from <http://coastwatch.org/europe/coastwatch-litter-survey-results>

The 2015 survey runs from 15 September to 15 October. Information on how to take part is available from <http://coastwatch.org/europe/all-ireland-survey-2015/>

Live Here Love Here



It's easy to show your support. Join the many people just like you, who care about the environment they live in. Show your support to say that you want to play your part in helping to keep Northern Ireland a clean and beautiful place to live. It's easy

- one little click, one big difference! Visit <http://www.livehereandlovehere.org/Join-in/Take-the-pledge.aspx> and take the pledge to show your support for our community can-do campaign today.

Coca-Cola Coast Care Awards

Volunteers who have gone the extra mile to clean up and look after our coastline, loughs and inland waterways were recognised as part of the prestigious Coca-Cola Coast Care Awards and Seminar event which was held in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 8 October 2015.



Winners of the 'Love Your Lough' award for their work in cleaning up Carlingford Lough.



Winners of the eco-tourism award for their work in promoting Grey Point fort and keeping the carpark litter free.

Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Environment, Ms Anna Lo, presented the dedicated volunteers with their awards. The event was hosted by mentalist David Meade.

The Coca-Cola Coast Care programme, administered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, supports the work of volunteers who carry out practical work to reduce the impact of litter and other environmental damage, and who help preserve the natural beauty of these areas.

[continue reading News](#) ➤

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

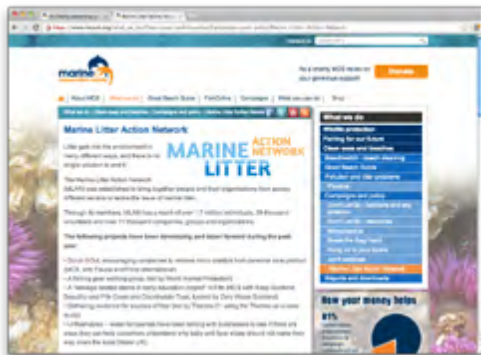
[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

Marine Litter Action Network

The Marine Litter Action Network (MLAN), established by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has completed its initial "year to make a difference". Among the initiatives being taken forward are Sewage Related Debris in early education (workshops with school children have been held in the Fife area), and the Cool Seas Investigators: "The Unflushables" project which has become a reality.

The Microplastics (Scrub it Out!) campaign has secured a public commitment from product manufacturers and also from a wide range of UK supermarkets and high-street retailers such as Sainsburys, Marks and Spencers and Tesco. They have all made it clear that they will no longer be using microplastic ingredients in their products.



MCS are delighted to report that MLAN will be continuing and the second year will see the network provide a knowledge hub to catalyze joint working on solutions, help people to continue to connect with each other and share updates on existing and new initiatives. MCS are also planning an annual networking event in 2016.

The MLAN end of year report and film launched at the end of September, further updates are available from www.mcsuk.org/

If you would like to be a member of MLAN, go to [http://www.mcsuk.org/what we do/Clean+seas+and+beaches/Campaigns+and+policy/Marine+Litter+Action+Network](http://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/Clean+seas+and+beaches/Campaigns+and+policy/Marine+Litter+Action+Network) to find out how you can help be part of the solution.

World Animal Protection Sea Change Champion Award

Congratulations to Nigel Sanders, a Swansea based fisherman, who was nominated as the first Sea Change Champion by the World Animal Protection charity. Nigel's innovative project reduces the impact of lost lobster pots on the marine environment and prevents lobsters and other marine



Nigel Sanders receiving his Sea Change Champion Award from Christina Dixon

animals being unnecessarily caught. As part of his work he has championed sustainable solutions to other local fishermen and worked hard to secure funding for innovation projects. Nigel is pictured above with Christina Dixon.

The World Animal Protection hopes to make the award an annual event, so look out for next year's competition on the website www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/seachange

Additional information is available from Christina Dixon christinadixon@worldanimalprotection.org.uk

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

2 Minute Beach Clean

by Tracey McKane - Responsible Beach User

The inspiration

The “2 minute beach clean” is a Twitter campaign started by Martin Dorey (@campervanliving), a writer and surfer from Cornwall. The aim is to encourage beach visitors to spend a minimum of 2 minutes, before they go home from the beach, picking up as much plastic litter as possible in that short time. Photographs of each beach haul may be uploaded and posted on Instagram or Twitter, using the hashtag; #2minutebeachclean, to encourage and inspire other beach users to join in the clean-up.

How 2 minutes really adds up to one big environmental benefit

TV programmes such as BBC news & Springwatch have recently featured Martin explaining the concept behind the 2 minute beach clean and that by taking part individuals are helping to address the growing danger that marine litter is presenting to sea creatures on a global scale. The photographic record collection on Twitter and Instagram documents the huge amount of hazardous material that has been removed from our beaches around



the world so far, proving that all those individual 2 minutes really add up to one big environmental benefit.

Ageing litter

I regularly beach clean whilst walking my dog and some of the litter I have found on beaches this past year has surprised me because of its age. I have found three drinks cans that are at least thirty years old. They are the removable ring-pull type and this design was discontinued in Europe in 1980's, as it was deemed to be a choking risk. One of the cans I found still contained the ring-pull which had been removed and placed inside the can all those years ago.

Another packaging component is the plastic ‘Smarties’ lid which was discontinued in 2005 but many are still washing up on beaches around the UK ten years on.

Some pieces of litter wash up and the sell by date is readable even after many years. Earlier in the year I found part of a butter tub with a date that read: 11 Feb 99, making it sixteen years old.

Why I keep cleaning

The evidence shows that plastics take a very long time to break down. Some types of plastic such as monofilament fishing line will take up to six hundred years to do so. Plastics in our oceans cause suffering and death to millions of seabirds and marine mammals every year worldwide as a result of either ingestion or entanglement. For this reason I aim to do a #2minutebeachclean every time I visit a beach. I for one though find it hard to stop at two minutes.

For more information and inspiration visit the website beachclean.net

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

A call to action from Surfers Against Sewage

by Andy Cummins, Campaigns Director, Surfers Against Sewage. Contact: andy@sas.org.uk

Halving marine litter by 2020

Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) has set out an ambitious target of reducing marine litter levels by 50% by the year 2020. To support this target the charity recently published their Marine Litter Report, a 2014 to 2020 Vision.

Marine Litter Report

The SAS Marine Litter Report sounds the alarm for the UK's trashed tidelines, highlighting the environmental impacts on marine ecosystems and wildlife, and the unaffordable costs to industries including fisheries and tourism. The report details plenty of easy to adopt actions that individuals and communities can embrace immediately, which is downloadable from our website www.sas.org.uk/

Innovative Initiatives

Surfers Against Sewage suggests innovative new initiatives to stop marine litter at source; including smoking bans on beaches, introducing prominent environmental health warnings on single-use packaging, reinstating container deposit schemes and better enforcement of fines for littering along our coastline.

The Marine Litter Report is supported by years of successful campaigning to reduce marine litter. Two of Surfers Against Sewage's most popular anti-marine litter campaigns are the Return To Offender and UFO campaigns.

Return to Offender Campaign

This campaign returns identifiable marine litter to the companies that made it, challenging them to support an extended producer responsibility programme, increase their anti-littering messages and reduce the single use plastic content of their packaging. Surfers Against Sewage have sent back over 3,000 identifiable items of litter found on UK beaches. You can do the same by downloading our Return To Offender letter from the website.

UFO Campaign

The Unidentified Floating Objects (UFO) campaign aims to identify, trace and eliminate persistent items of marine litter found on UK beaches through research, social networks and other consultation and to then tackle those responsible. Once the item is identified, Surfers Against Sewage calls on the manufacturer, distributor or business



to develop active and improved product stewardship strategies to protect the environment.

Anyone can send photos and real samples of potential UFOs for investigation and promotion through our extensive supporter networks.

Get involved

Last year the Surfers Against Sewage beach clean programmes attracted almost 10,000 volunteers and removed over 70,000 kilograms of litter. There are always beach cleans organised for Northern Ireland so contact Surfers Against Sewage and help protect your beautiful beaches.

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

Seasearch – diving into conservation

by Claire Goodwin and Charmaine Beer, Northern Ireland Seasearch Coordinators. Contact: seasearchni@gmail.com

What is Seasearch?

In Northern Ireland we have some of the best coastal wreck and scenic scuba diving sites in the UK and Ireland. These are enjoyed by local divers and also attract many tourists. People who want to take their diving a step further can help protect the marine environment by participating in Seasearch, a scheme for recreational scuba-divers run by the Marine Conservation Society. Until recently the Northern Ireland branch of this project was funded by NIEA.

Data Collection

Volunteers are trained to identify and record marine life and habitats and then participate in organised surveys and also record life on their own dives.



Rocking horse recovered from the deep.

Volunteers record the good and the bad aspects of what they see. All the data is checked and validated and is then made freely available for anyone to use. It feeds into government programmes for the designation and protection of the seas and by using volunteers we can greatly increase the survey coverage of our waters.

Types of litter

As well as marine species and habitats Seasearch divers record human impacts such as litter. So far the litter recorded ranges from the expected cans, fishing gear and gloves, monofilament fishing line, and discarded lobster pots to more unusual things that have been dumped - divers have reported bizarre items such as an old toilet, a bike, uneaten Cadbury's crème eggs, and even two credit cards!

Value of Seasearch Data

Litter is usually seen in areas close to human occupation like harbours, anchorages and bathing beaches. The shallow inshore depths where Seasearch volunteers collect this data is a zone from which minimal data exists, as fishing and scientific

surveys tend to survey in deeper water. Seasearch trained scuba divers provide a very detailed account of what they see underwater and this provides a valuable insight into what is taking place beneath our waves.

All our data is open access at the National Biodiversity Network <https://data.nbn.org.uk/>



For more information see www.seasearch.org.uk/ or email seasearchni@gmail.com if you are interested in diving with us.

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

Implications of marine litter

by Mike McAliskey, Marine Scientist, Marine Division DOE. Contact: michael.mcaliskey@doeni.gov.uk

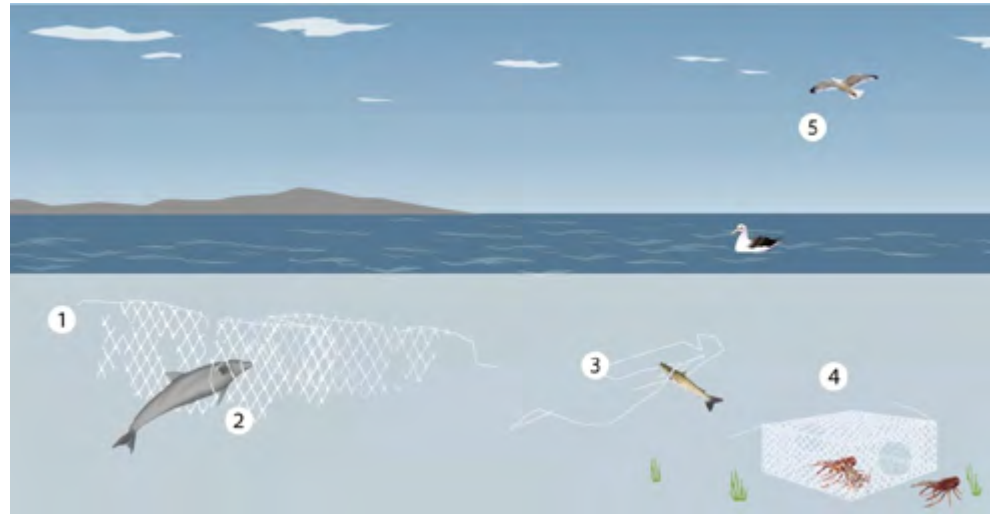
Litter is an environmental, human health and socio-economic problem that is a symptom of a highly disposable society. We made more plastic in the past 10 years than in the whole of previous history and production is growing exponentially. However, plastic doesn't break down. Every piece of plastic you have used in your life will still exist long after you have died.

The UN estimates that one million sea birds and at least 100,000 seals, dolphins, whales and turtles are killed each year by plastic – either because they mistake it for food or become entangled in it.

Ghost gear

Ghost fishing gear (deliberately abandoned or accidentally lost nets, rope and line) poses a significant risk to marine wildlife around the world.

Seals are particularly at risk. Inquisitive young seals can play with netting floating in the sea and end up with it around their necks. The incredibly tough, non-degradable synthetic net does not expand as the animals grow, meaning it often ends up slicing through their flesh,



1: Lost or discarded nets. 2: Marine mammals are susceptible to entanglement. 3: Discarded line. 4: Lost pots and traps. 5: Seabirds are also susceptible. Image courtesy of UNEP.

causing open sores and wounds that can become badly infected, prevent the animal from foraging or feeding properly, and even kill them.

Whales and dolphins can get rope and netting stuck around fins and tail flukes, some seabirds incorporate fishing line and net into their nests, which can trap or strangle adults and chicks.

New link in the food chain? Marine plastic pollution and seafood safety.

Although plastic does not biodegrade, it does break down into smaller and smaller pieces in the sea and is consumed by many small sea creatures, particularly filter feeders.

[continue reading](#) ➤

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Implications of marine litter continued

Shellfish, worms, crustaceans and coral all consume microplastics. The smallest pieces are even ingested by zooplankton, the foundation of the whole marine food chain.

These undigestible plastic fragments bung creatures up, prevent them from obtaining sufficient nutrition, and also attract toxins from the surrounding seawater, accumulating in the animals' body tissues.

Toxins in seawater, many banned decades ago, such as DDT and PCB, adhere to the surface of floating plastics, making them even more harmful to animals that consume them. Research is being conducted into the endocrine-disrupting effects of these chemicals in many species, and the way they are bio-magnified up the food chain in higher predators such as whales, dolphins, seabirds. And humans?

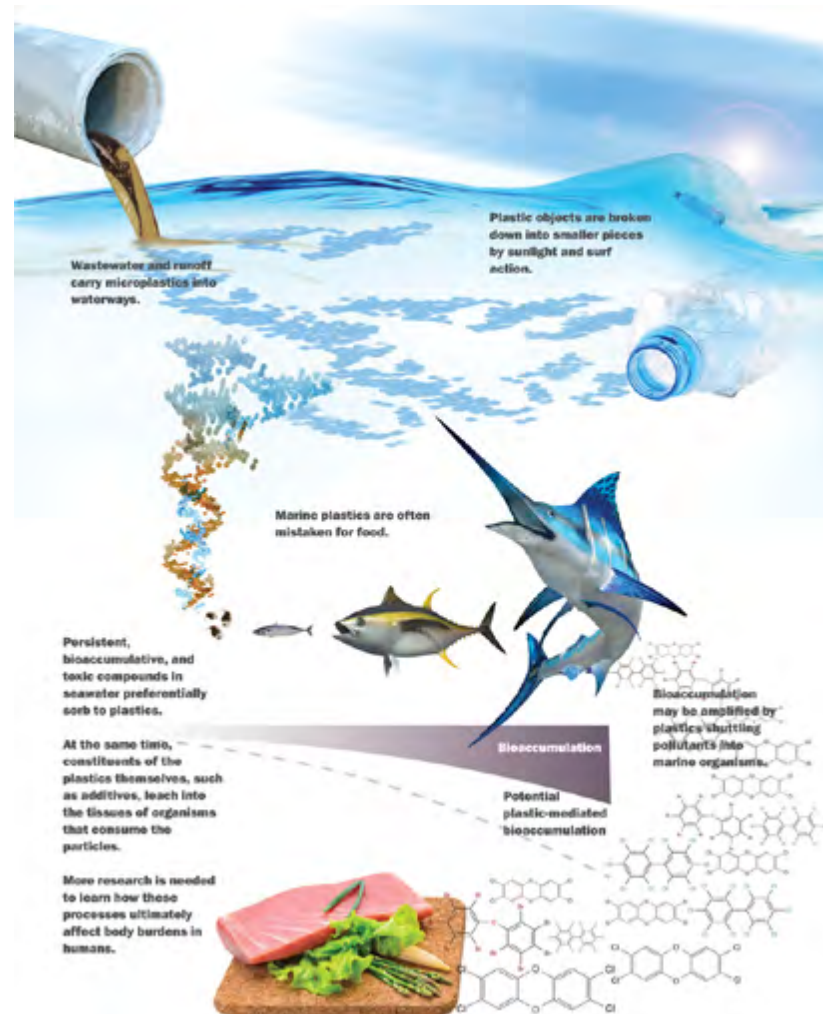


Image courtesy of UNEP.

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

Marine Litter Watch

Newsletter

Issue 06 – Autumn 2015

Produced by:

DOE Marine Division
Klondyke Building,
Cromac Avenue,
Belfast,
BT7 2JA

For further information on the work of the DOE Marine Division, or to submit an article for inclusion in the Marine Litter Watch Newsletter, please contact Susan Cramer.

E-mail: susan.cramer@doeni.gov.uk

Hello & Welcome

[Read More...](#)

News

[Read More...](#)

2 Minute Beach Clean

Just 2 minutes tidying can make a big difference

[Read More...](#)

Surfers Against Sewage

Aiming to halve marine litter by 2020

[Read More...](#)

Seasearch

Diving into Conservation

[Read More...](#)

Implications of Marine Litter

Assessing the impact of plastics on the marine environment

[Read More...](#)

Contact details

[Read More...](#)

