

Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter
Issue 08 - Autumn 2016

Where does your plastic go?



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

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter

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Hello & Welcome

by Dr. John Speers, Director of Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA.



Dr. John Speers

Welcome to the Autumn 2016 edition of Marine Litter Watch.

I would like to take this opportunity to give you a brief overview of the work of our new Marine and Fisheries Division which was established in May 2016. Marine and Fisheries Division was formed on the inception of the new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. This is a major structural change. The new Division has a broad and challenging remit and we are excited about the new opportunities that this presents.

Our Functions

Our work includes managing the sustainable use of the **marine environment** through marine planning and licensing; conservation and protection, and monitoring activities in the marine area.



Whale Watch by Gary Burrows

Our **fisheries** responsibilities encompass sea and inland fisheries. We are responsible for the management of sea fisheries, policy and grants, enforcing fisheries regulations and managing and developing aquaculture and fish health policy and legislation. Inland fisheries are also part of our remit,

including the conservation of salmon and eels as well as policy, legislation and licensing fresh water angling.

Our Division, along with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, is responsible for sponsorship of the **Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission** whose functions in the Foyle and Carlingford areas are exercised by the Loughs Agency.

Synergies

We are a multi-disciplinary team working together to ensure the sustainable use of our marine environment. Addressing marine litter is relevant to a number of our work areas.



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I would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles and updates to Marine Litter Watch. 80% of the litter items observed on our coast in 2014 were plastic. Our fabulous cover image has been reproduced with the consent of Take3. Take 3 is an Australian organisation which is campaigning to change attitudes by encouraging people to Refuse disposable plastic; Reduce, Re-use and Recycle, and Respond to the challenge of marine litter by picking up 3 pieces of litter.

Article Summary

The theme of this edition of Marine Litter Watch is how education initiatives are helping to change attitudes and littering behaviour. We open with an article from **Kate Wilson**, Digital and Media Coordinator at the Marine Conservation Society. Kate describes how she promoted and rose to the challenge of living without single use plastics for a month. Could you take the challenge?

Angela Halpenny from NI Water describes the very successful year the company has had educating the public on the importance of saving water and not flushing inappropriate items down the toilet. Northern Ireland Water visited a record 19,072 pupils during the 2015/16 academic year and is already looking forward to 2016/17.



Nicola Fitzsimmons of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful describes how funding from the 'Live Here Love Here' campaign has enabled volunteers from the Lagan Rivers Trust to buy a boat to remove litter from otherwise inaccessible areas. The article highlights the linkages between riverine and coastal litter.

Dave Wall explains the real difference the Ulster Wildlife Living Seas programme is making in addressing marine litter through working in

partnership with community groups to undertake clean ups.

Graham Humphreys, UK Coordinator for KIMO International. Graham reports on the contribution made by the Fishing for Litter project to removing litter from the sea and how a further 850 million pieces of litter could easily be removed from the marine environment if people living close to the coast removed 3 pieces of litter a month.



In the Mix

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Marine Conservation Society Wet Wipes campaign

Flushed wet wipes are causing serious issues; it only takes a few to clog up drains causing overflows. When they team up with fats and oils they create massive fatbergs in the public sewers. Nearly 4,000 wet wipes were found during the Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean 2015, around the UK coastline – that's roughly 50 for every kilometre cleaned – a 30% rise on the previous year and a staggering 400% rise in a decade.

The MCS '[Wet Wipes Turn Nasty When You Flush Them](#)' monster campaign highlights that wet wipes should not be disposed of by flushing them in the toilet. Flushing unflushables causes blockages in the sewerage system and costs UK water companies over £81 million a year to clear. The campaign educates and urges the public to get behind a petition for clearer wet wipe labelling. Please support us and spread the word.

Proposed ban on microbeads in cosmetic products

On 3 September Defra Environment Secretary, Andrea Leadsom announced plans to ban the sale and manufacture of cosmetics and personal care products containing tiny pieces of plastic, commonly known as 'microbeads'. The proposed ban follows the publication of a report by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee on 24th August 2016 into the environmental impact of microplastics. The Report is based



Microplastics

on evidence from the industry and scientists. Information is available from :

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/environmental-impact-of-microplastics-15-16/>

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 susan.cramer@daera-ni.gov.uk

Toilet Monster



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[Tying the Celtic Knot - Creating lasting partnerships for the Celtic Seas – Croke Park 18/19th October](#)

The WWF-led EU Celtic Seas Partnership project is holding its third and final multi-national workshop at Croke Park, Dublin, on the 18th and 19th of October. The project encourages cross-border working between Ireland, the UK and France to tackle marine management issues including marine litter.



Fishermen talking at Sea

This final event will bring together the results of the project, including the work of its Marine Litter Task Group. The Task Group has developed an innovative proposal for a pilot project

which will involve the international Eco-Schools network with activities to increase awareness, prevention and reduction of marine litter.

For more details and registration please go to - tyingthecelticknot.eventbrite.co.uk

[Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority \(NIFHA\) primary school education programme.](#)

Pictured are children from St Nicholas Primary School Ardglass receiving their certificates for completing the first NIFHA Happy Harbours primary school programme. This programme aims to share the importance of

caring for the marine environment with children. This is one of the five core modules covered. The children also learned about safety in the fishing industry and the work of the harbours. NIFHA was delighted that schools from all three of the harbour communities it serves took part in the programme.

CEO Kevin Quigley commented, "For all our staff working on this programme it has been an absolute delight. The enthusiasm of the pupils and their teachers is hugely infectious. We are already looking forward to launching next year's programme".



St Nicholas Certificate Award

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World Animal Protection launches a new film of fishermen trialling solutions for the sea

International charity, World Animal Protection launched a new film and materials showing how fishermen are helping each other to protect their businesses from the blight of ghost gear. (Watch the [film here](#))

Two of the fishermen featured are part of the Pembrokeshire Sustainable Shellfish Initiative to trial fast degrading hooks for escape hatches on lobster pots and hog rings with a weak link mechanism. Another interviewee is with an environmental diver from Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners, explaining how the project he runs is reuniting lost lobster pots with their rightful owners to save them money and protect the seas.

Tips include:

- Installing escape hatches on all pots to enable juveniles to escape;
- Weighting pots so they don't move;
- Reporting lost gear if it can't be recovered safely;

- Securing lids and escape panels with biodegradable cotton escape cord to enable escape of all captured marine life;
- Weighting lines to sink below surface and avoid being cut by a passing boat.

World Animal Protection's dedicated web hub provides educational materials to raise awareness of preventative measures and best practice.

All the materials can be found [here](#).

Circular Economy (CE) post-Brexit

A number of briefing papers have been prepared following the EU Referendum. [The House of Commons Briefing Paper](#) examines the potential impact of Brexit across a number of policy areas and the Northern Ireland Assembly has produced an [EU Referendum Update Paper](#). The "[Norway option](#)" is an option discussed in journals. This would mean the UK remains within the European Free Trade Area and could mean continued compliance with many EU environmental laws, including forthcoming legislation on

the Circular Economy Package, such as new Product Design Directives.

From national politics, to grass-roots pioneers; the [Guardian](#) recently gave examples of how CE-thinking is spurring innovations with a broad range of benefits. One such venture is Ruby Moon. This company is making swimwear using regenerated yarn, made from ghost fishing nets and other waste. Profits are then lent out as small loans to empower woman entrepreneurs in developing countries.

The Circular Economy is based on changing the way people think about consumption and disposal – embedding cultural changes which will, in the not-so-distant future, make littering as likely as throwing money away. (Apart from wishing wells!)



Dead seal, Innishtrahull Island, off Malin Head, taken by David Friel

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The Plastic Challenge

by *Kate Wilson, Digital Marketing and Media Officer (and Plastic Challenger!) Marine Conservation Society*

Contact Kate.Wilson@mcsuk.org



Kate Wilson

I took on the Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) Plastic Challenge giving up single-use plastic in an attempt to highlight the growing problem in our seas. Plastic is durable and lightweight, but it's these properties that allow it to remain in the marine environment for hundreds if not thousands of years. Plastics are among the most persistent synthetic materials in existence and are now an extensive marine pollutant.

Changing attitudes

The Plastic Challenge aims to change people's attitudes towards single-use

plastics, and to encourage people to value plastic as a resource – not just seeing it as packaging without any thought of the environmental impact. Along with almost 1,000 people, I said goodbye to conveniences like pre-packed sandwiches, ready meals and plastic bottled drinks for 30 days.

Our reliance on plastics

By its very nature, it's a tricky challenge. It highlights how reliant we have become on plastic. But once you get into it and get yourself organised, it gets much easier. I started in the bathroom, and replaced almost everything with plastic free alternatives after a quick visit to Lush. No more soap and shampoo bottles, tooth paste tubes or mouthwash bottles. It really is amazing how much we depend on single use plastic when we really don't need to. The same goes for cleaning products from washing powder to window cleaner - you really can cut out a huge amount of plastic from your life.

The hardest items to find plastic-free were dried goods like pasta, rice and pulses, along with milk and loo paper. Boxed lasagne sheets were a saviour for me!

One of my top tips "Get organised, do some initial research and plan ahead."



Join us in 2017

Have a go at the Plastic Challenge, even if you can only manage a single day, and you'll never look at your shopping in the same way again!

Sign up for June 2017 at www.mcsuk.org/plasticchallenge

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Another Successful Year Delivering Key Environmental Messages for NI Water's Education Programme *by Angela Halpenny, Head of Environmental Regulation, Northern Ireland Water.*

Contact: Angela.Halpenny@niwater.com

NI Water's education team visited a record number of 19,072 pupils from primary and post primary schools across Northern Ireland during the 2015/16 school year!



Water Bus St Columba's Kilrea

Educational Resources

Pupils from over 280 schools learned important environmental messages including how to save water, what not to flush down the loo, water conservation and, in some cases, even had the chance to see a working sewage works! That's without mentioning the chance to become a nature detective for a tour around the scenic Silent Valley Reservoir and become a passenger on our travelling classroom, the Waterbus, with over 12,100 primary school pupils visiting the bus alone!

What can cause sewer blockages?

Every day hundreds of disposable items such as baby wipes, cleaning wipes, cotton buds and nappies get flushed down the toilet, blocking our sewerage systems and sometimes ending up on our beaches. We clear in the region of 16,000 sewer blockages every year, many of which are avoidable through better practices.

Environmental Champions

Our newly appointed Environmental Champions recruited from across Northern Ireland Water play their part in contributing to improve the environment we live in. Environmental Champions influence and educate the public across Northern Ireland, helping to spread far and wide the importance of saving water and not flushing inappropriate items down the toilet.

3 Ps - Pee, Poo and Paper

Our Environmental Champions will continue to remind the public to only

flush the 3 Ps; Pee, Poo and Paper, whilst everything else should go in the bin! Check out our website to learn more <https://www.niwater.com/home/>

A successful year

We had a very successful educational year. It's great to work with the water users of tomorrow and to educate them on the value of water to us all as human beings. We are looking forward to the 2016/17 school year.



Ballyclare New Mum's Dirty Dozen

How to access our educational resources

If you would like to book a class talk or community group talk, please contact education@niwater.com

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Live Here Love Here – making a difference with the Lagan Rivers Trust

by Nicola Fitzsimmons, Community Development Officer, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

Contact: nicola.fitzsimmons@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

Live Here Love Here is about creating a sense of pride and loving where you live. The Small Grants Scheme provides grants from **£500 to £5,000** to volunteer and community groups, educational establishments and youth and sports clubs wanting to build community pride through environmental improvement projects. Live Here Love Here (www.livehereandlovehere.com) is a growing partnership currently involving seven local Councils, DAERA, Tourism NI, Choice Housing, Coca Cola and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

Small Grants Scheme funding to buy a boat

In 2015 the Lagan Rivers Trust were awarded funding under the Small Grants Scheme to buy a small boat. The grant has enabled volunteers to carry out regular litter picks from otherwise inaccessible places including the riverside trees and bushes and bed of the River Lagan. The Lagan Rivers Trust carries out

regular clean ups along the River Lagan. The aim of their project is to stop litter reaching the beaches of Belfast Lough and beyond.



Flying the Flag - Trevor Ogborn, Secretary, Lagan Rivers Trust and Nicola Fitzsimmons.

Volunteers take part in Citizen Science

The Lagan Rivers Trust also monitors water quality using a MiniSASS water sampling kit won through a Coca-Cola Clean Coast Programme competition. MiniSASS is a citizen science tool, which uses the make-up of macro-invertebrates living in the rivers to

interpret the condition of the river (please see www.minisass.org).

As the families of insects occur all over the world, people from Ethiopia, India, Australia, Mexico, Canada and



Rivers Trust – Gary Houston, Lagan Rivers Trust and Nicola Fitzsimmons

Northern Ireland have been using the MiniSASS system. It appears as though it can work in virtually any river or stream in the world!

Benefits down-stream

The Lagan Rivers Trust hopes to continue with the project for many years to come and they hope that their inland efforts will have some benefits on the levels of litter along the Belfast Lough coastline.

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Ulster Wildlife Living Seas Programme cleans up our coast

by Dave Wall, Living Seas Officer, Ulster Wildlife

Contact: dave.wall@ulsterwildlife.org

Ulster Wildlife's Living Seas Team have been busy conducting beach cleans with local volunteers and partner organisations. We kicked off with the Big Spring Clean in March and April with clean ups at Ballylumford and Kilroot with the Green Team at AES UK & Ireland. Together we removed 80 bags of litter from the two shorelines.



Glenarm Beach Clean

Link up with Love Your Lough

In April we joined colleagues from Love Your Lough for a clean-up at Mill Bay Carlingford where we removed 65 bags full of plastic litter, 35 tyres, 26 plastic drums, 3 zimmer frames, 1 commode, 7 car bumpers, 4 bikes, a 30ft Asda sign, 3 TV's, 20 lengths of PVC drainpipe, a section of a plastic marina pontoon, a toilet and a pile of scrap metal!

Heading North in May

May saw beach cleans at Glenarm with Glenarm Wildlife Group, and at Groomsport with local volunteers, resulting in 39 sacks of litter lifted. In July we travelled to Portrush to meet up with the Loughs Agency

Ambassadors for a snorkel safari, followed by a beach clean.

Working with the Loughs Agency Ambassadors

The Loughs Agency Ambassador programme gives 14-18 year olds from the Foyle area a chance to learn new skills and to engage with the sea. 11 Ambassadors took part in a snorkel at the Blue Pool, followed by a beach clean at East Strand, where we filled six sacks with plastic waste and beer bottles found discarded in the dunes.

Collaboration with Coastwatch

Our annual Coastwatch citizen science started on 15th September. These surveys are an eco-audit of our coast and record litter, nitrate and nitrite pollution in outflows, and intertidal marine biodiversity. Each survey transect is 500m in length and survey training is available through Ulster Wildlife.



Carlingford Beach Clean

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Ten Years of Fishing for Litter *by Graham Humphreys, UK National Coordinator, KIMO*

Contact: kimouk@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Here at KIMO (Local Authorities International Environment Organisation) UK we have been working for 25 years to ensure our seas are safe and pollution free.



almost 1,000 tonnes of that coming from Scotland, another 160 tonnes from our project in South West England and 29 tonnes from the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie. In the UK, KIMO operates FFL from 24 harbours with more 370 vessels participating, 135 of these from Northern Ireland.

FFL Results

Recent research published by [DEFRA](#) has revealed that we are achieving our aim of changing behaviours and improving waste management practice on board.

My role as coordinator

I spend a bit of time talking to fishermen – which is always interesting. Everyone I speak to is really keen on the project and always has lots of good suggestions.

I never have a dull moment and find myself doing everything from paying bills to lobbying government ministers and delivering talks on

Marine Litter to primary school children – assisted by Freddie the Fulmar.



Pick up Three Pieces Project

We have talked to over 250 children about the problems caused by marine litter and where it comes from. It is surprising what even the youngest know about the sea and their questions can be very challenging. During lessons we introduce our 'Pick up Three Pieces' project. This simply encourages beach visitors to take away three pieces of litter on every visit.

If everyone living near the coast in the UK did that once a month we would remove 850 million pieces of litter each year. This just shows what could be achieved if we all work together. Have a look at our Pick Up 3 Pieces video on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pickup3uk/>)

4,500 tonnes of litter removed from the sea

Internationally, KIMO's FFL projects have collected more than 4,500 tonnes of litter from our seas - with

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

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ISBN: 978-1-84807-689-1

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