

# Northern Ireland Seaweed Harvesting

## Code of Conduct



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs

An Roinn

Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department o'

Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

DAERA advises that anyone harvesting seaweed in Northern Ireland should follow this Code, whether harvesting is for personal or commercial purposes.

### Before you harvest – key requirements

- Obtain permission from the landowner first
- Consult DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division and your local Council before harvesting
- Check if the site is within an ASSI, SAC, SPA or MCZ - [NI Marine Map Viewer](#)
- Harvest seaweed only by hand – mechanical methods must not be used
- Do not use vehicles on the foreshore unless a Marine Licence has been issued
- It is an offence to cause the spread of non-native species
- It is an offence to cause disturbance to protected species, including birds and marine mammals

### Harvesting advice

- Collect less than one third of any individual plant to allow regrowth
- Cut fronds well above the point of growth and always leave the holdfast attached
- Harvest sparsely, taking only a small proportion of standing stock
- Rotate harvesting areas and allow time for recovery (up to several years)
- Harvest during active growth seasons and after reproduction where possible
- Ensure a substantial proportion of mature plants remain
- Keep records of species, volumes, dates, and locations harvested

### Protect wildlife and habitats

- Keep at least 100 m away from wildlife, especially nesting birds (Mar–Jul) and seal pup season (Aug–Jan)
- Minimise trampling on the shore and avoid taking bycatch
- Replace rocks carefully in their original position
- Follow [Check, Clean, Dry](#) biosecurity principles when moving between sites
- Take extra care when harvesting non-native species to avoid spreading spores
- Do not remove all drift seaweed from strandlines – it provides important habitat
- Limit harvesting in erosion-prone areas such as dunes and near kelp forests