

Marine Litter Watch



Newsletter
Issue 11 - 2017/18



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

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Hello & Welcome to the Winter 2017/18 edition of Marine Litter Watch

by Susan Cramer, Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

Welcome to the winter 2017/18 edition of Marine Litter Watch. I'd like to start by saying a big thank you to everyone who has contributed by sending articles, news and updates. Our cover image was provided by Gary Burrows. I would also like to encourage anyone who has ideas for future articles and updates to email me at susan.cramer@daera-ni.gov.uk

Blue Planet II

2017 ended on a high with another series of the critically acclaimed Blue Planet. The programmes brought the ocean into our homes and revealed the amazing life that exists there. It also highlighted how human impacts, and particularly plastic pollution is damaging our marine environment globally and how we can all help to protect the Earth's oceans.

Alert – World War II Incendiary Devices washed up on our shore

Since 1993 almost 200 World War II

incendiary devices have been washed up on our shore. The cylinders are completely stable in water, but when they dry out the phosphorus starts to fume and spontaneous combustion follows. If you see anything you suspect might be ammunition when you are at the coast, DO NOT touch it and call the police immediately.



Article Summary

Our first article is by Gavin Ellis, co-founder of Hubbub. Gavin describes the For Fish's Sake Campaign which launched in London in May 2017.



Our next article by Ian Humphreys, Chief Executive of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful highlights that changing littering behaviour is complex and has no single solution.

Mike McAliskey, a marine scientist from DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division describes the work involved in preparing the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment. This was published in 2017 and is an assessment of the marine environment in the north east Atlantic.

Finally, looking back to summer ... some of you may remember the visit of the Sea Dragon to Belfast in August. Sue Weaver, member of eXXpedition recalls her voyage around UK waters.



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DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division Update

DAERA staff contribute to seascape videos

Staff within DAERA's Marine Conservation and Reporting team helped Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust with the production of several HD Seascape videos. DAERA staff provided interviews, underwater film and images to assist CCGHT.

Below are links to the videos which are shown to visitors in Portrush Coastal Zone. The first video provides an overview of the spectacular Causeway Coast; the five shorter films include much more marine conservation content from DAERA staff on themes such as diversity, climate and coastal pressures.

(1) diversity of landscape - <https://youtu.be/JQzg5CBYPco>

(2) recreation activities - <https://youtu.be/pNh92SxFrU>

(3) life along the coast - <https://youtu.be/-MrcbT6nwEE>

(4) seasonability and climate - <https://youtu.be/13GpBJnXBrI>

(5) pressures on the coastal environment - https://youtu.be/N6K9V3S_Fpg

Ban on microbeads

Work is continuing in all UK Administrations to bring forward legislation to ban the manufacture and sale of rinse off cosmetic products containing microbeads. The ban on the manufacture in England became effective from 9 January. This will be followed by the ban on the sale of rinse off cosmetic products containing microbeads becoming effective on 19th June 2018.

In Northern Ireland, DAERA is seeking to introduce both bans to align with England, Scotland and Wales. This is expected to be by July 2018, pending outcomes of consultations, EU notification processes and legislative procedures.



Ballintoy provided by DAERA

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10th Anniversary of the Coastcare Awards

On Thursday 5th October, Live Here Love Here and Coca-Cola celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Coca-Cola Coast Care Awards. The event recognises the work of volunteers who have gone the extra mile to care for our coastline and inland waterways. Congratulations to all nominees and [award winners](#) and a big thank you to everyone who has helped clean up our environment.



Martin Dorey founder of the #2minutebeachclean speaks to attendees at the Coastcare Awards.

A decade of dedicated action

To celebrate a decade of dedicated action, the 2017 Awards took place in the evening with a dinner in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings. The host was weather man Barra Best and the guest speaker was Martin Dorey, writer, surfer and founder of the #2minutebeachclean campaign.

The number of people, groups and events have been increasing year on year. The number of bags collected during 2017 was 3,611.

Warrenpoint joins the Northern Ireland Fishing for Litter Scheme

In August 2017, Warrenpoint Harbour Authority joined the scheme, and ten vessels have already signed up to take part.

30th Coastwatch Survey September/October 2017

Our last edition of Marine Litter Watch featured an article by Karin Dubsky and graphics by Angel Duarte which explained the work of Coastwatch. During September and October, volunteers on the island of Ireland participated in the 30th Coastwatch Survey.



Part 1 launches.

The results have been analysed and Part 1 of the 2017 Report launched on 11th December at an event in Trinity College Dublin.

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Thank you to everyone who took part in gathering information on biodiversity and levels of litter on our coast.

Costa Rica aims to become the first country to eliminate single-use plastics by 2021

Costa Rica has emerged as a global environmental leader through programmes to reverse deforestation and ambitious targets to become carbon neutral by 2021. By 2016, around 98% of its energy was generated from green sources. On World Environment Day 2017 (5 June), officials from the Costa Rican

government announced it would embark on a single-use plastics ban by 2021. Costa Rica intends replacing single use plastics with biodegradable or water-soluble alternatives, or products made from renewable sources.

The initiative is led by Costa Rica's Ministry of Health and Environment and its Ministry of Energy with support from the United Nations Development Programme, local government, civic society and various private sector groups.

The abundance of plastic

A number of studies published recently suggest that plastic and microplastics are just about everywhere. Indeed it appears we are

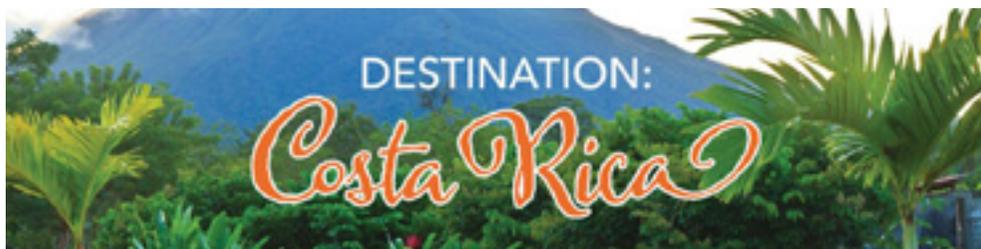
living in the Age of Plastic. A study published in 2015 found evidence of microplastics, mainly fibres, in [atmospheric fallout](#) in Paris. It now appears that plastic particles have been found in [tap water](#) and plastic is also used to heat seal some [tea bags](#).

EAC inquiry into Disposable Coffee Cups and Plastic Bottles

The [Westminster Environmental Audit Committee](#) published two reports on its inquiry into disposable packaging. These are Plastic Bottles: Turning Back the Plastic Tide which was published Friday 22 December and the Disposable Packaging: Coffee Cups which was published on Friday 5 January 2018.

To help address plastic bottle pollution the Report recommends:

- Increasing public access to clean drinking water;
- Phased targets for a recycled PET content for new plastic bottles by 2030;



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- Incentivised targets to increase recycling of plastic bottles; and
- The introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme for all PET plastic drinks bottles.

The Report on coffee cups recommends:-

- Clearer consumer messaging on the recyclability of coffee cups;
- Clear targets for recycling; and
- A levy on disposable cups which should be used to support recycling bins and communication

Scotland plans to ban plastic cotton buds

On 11 January 2018 Scotland's Environment Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham, announced plans to ban plastic cotton buds. The move follows concerns about the number of buds being washed up on Scottish beaches. Plastic cotton buds are among the top 10 forms of beach litter. The ban will support responsible businesses,

such as Johnson and Johnson who switched from plastic in 2017. The proposed ban will be the subject of a public consultation.

Defra 25 Year Plan for the Environment

On 11 January 2018 the UK government announced a 25-year plan to improve the natural environment. Under the Plan, '[A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)', supermarkets will be urged to introduce "plastic-free" aisles while taxes and charges on single-use items such as takeaway containers will be considered.

The Plan includes commitments to:

- work to a target of eliminating avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042; and
- significantly reduce and where possible prevent all kinds of marine plastic pollution – in particular material that came originally from land.

UK signs up to Global Ghost Gear Initiative

The UK government pledged their support for the World Animal Protection's [Global Ghost Gear Initiative](#) (GGGI) at the [Our Ocean Conference](#). The Conference was hosted by the EU in Malta and took place over 5th-6th October 2017. Ghost gear is lost, abandoned or discarded fishing gear such as fishing nets, lines and traps. It has been found to trap, injure, mutilate and kill whales, seals, turtles and birds as well as fish.

Dr. Therese Coffey MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment, agreed to advance Global Ghost Gear International's mission and aims, including through active participation in constructive dialogue with all relevant partners, supporting GGGI objectives in national and international fora, and dedicated national action, including through providing active support for GGGI related initiatives, in accordance with national priorities.

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For Fish's Sake, Don't Drop Litter *by Gavin Ellis, co-founder of Hubbub*

Contact: gavin@hubbub.org.uk

The issue of ocean pollution is rapidly rising up the agenda as society wakes up to the amount of rubbish entering our oceans, damaging wildlife and ecosystems in the process. What is not yet common knowledge is the link between our everyday behaviours and ocean pollution. In fact, around 80% of the infamous ocean plastics come from land.

Stemming the flow of litter into the Thames

How can we raise awareness and change behaviour to stem the flow of litter into our waterways and ultimately our oceans?

It was with this question in mind that Hubbub launched 'For Fish's Sake' (#FFSLDN) in London in May. Our [Neat Streets](#) campaigns over the past two years have successfully reduced litter and engaged the public through positive, prevention-focussed campaigns. For Fish's Sake takes a similarly playful approach, but this



time with the explicit aim of stemming the flow of litter into the River Thames. We initially learned about the extent of the problem from the Port of London Authority (PLA) who manage the River Thames and clear 300 tonnes of litter from the Thames each year – that's the equivalent of 43 bottlenose whales!

Focus on typical city rubbish

The focus has been on typical city rubbish – small pieces of litter such as travel tickets, food wrappers, disposable crockery and cigarette butts. They are a particular problem because they are less likely to make it into a bin and once they're in the environment, they're extremely difficult to retrieve.

Gathering data

We surveyed Londoners and found that over half admit to squeezing litter into bins that are clearly overflowing. Common tidy-littering habits that Londoners say they've seen include leaving litter next to a bin (54%), placing drinks containers on a wall or other surface (56%) and putting rubbish down storm drains (30%). Younger people are twice as likely to litter – 55% of under-35s have done so, compared to only 27% of over 35s, supporting a need for campaigns that will resonate with younger people.

Litter is waste pollution

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the fact that littering on land is linked to marine pollution, and litter dropped anywhere in London



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Contact: gavin@hubbub.org.uk

can travel into the Thames. Secondly, to re-enforce that waste going anywhere apart from a designated bin equals waste littered, Hubbub have designed a range of installations and pop-up events.

Grate art

One of our most popular interventions so far has been 'grate art' - vinyl stickers depicting a fish's mouth around riverside grates, to make the connection that putting litter down drains is equivalent to feeding it directly to fish. The hashtag and tagline also featured on the vinyl,



Grate Art



Cabinet of Curiosities by the Thames

making it easy for us to track public engagement on social media.

Cabinet of Curiosities

Another pop-up installation is the Cabinet of Curiosities, created for the campaign in collaboration with the artist Maria Arceo. Maria has an impressive collection of both unexpected and mundane items that she has picked from the shores of the Thames, and kindly allowed us to exhibit some of them in a museum cabinet. This can pop up in various riverside locations throughout the summer. Among other things, an old

phone, brass knuckles and a single rollerblade show the random waste that finds its way into our waterways.

Improving public spaces

Further interventions include brightly coloured #FFSLDN branded bins, a [water zorbing event](#) and a community photograph and video gallery showcasing people who live, work and play on the Thames. We also have plans to improve public spaces around London Bridge, with the belief that when people are proud of a place they are less likely to litter it.

Replicating our campaign

#FFS is a replicable and cost-effective campaign ready to be rolled out in any area with a waterway that could do with a little boost of civic pride. To find out how to replicate the campaign in your local area, please get in touch with Hubbub Foundation (hello@hubbub.org.uk).

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Education as a Driver for Sustainable Behaviours by Ian Humphreys, Chief Executive, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful

Contact: ian.humphreys@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

Marine litter is increasingly in the news and the focus is on plastic. This is decimating marine animal populations, with dolphins drowning when caught in nets, turtles choking on plastic bags and albatrosses starving as they fill their stomachs with plastic pieces instead of food. The news is bad for us too as the plastic breaks down and finds its way back to us through the food chain. It will be a toxic problem for generations to come, not just around our coast but around the world.

Educating the next generation

Prevention is key but changing littering behaviour is complex and has no single solution. One strand of this is educating the next generation to behave more responsibly than many of us do now. There is much we can learn from the global experience and expertise. This came together in September 2016 at a conference in Ahmedabad, India, run by the Centre



for Environmental Education which focused on transforming education for children and youth. [Target 4.7](#) of Sustainable Development Goal 4 looks at whole institution approaches, particularly Eco-Schools. Eco-Schools operates in 64 countries and involves 16 million students in 49,000 schools. It highlighted the need for education to be transformative, to bring shared values to life and to cultivate an active care for the world.

Eco-Schools Northern Ireland

Eco-Schools is delivered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful through a wide network of partners in Northern Ireland. It aims to ensure young people have power to be the change for sustainability that our world needs by engaging them in fun, action-orientated and socially responsible learning. Litter is always assessed for the International Green Flag Award

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Difficult Questions

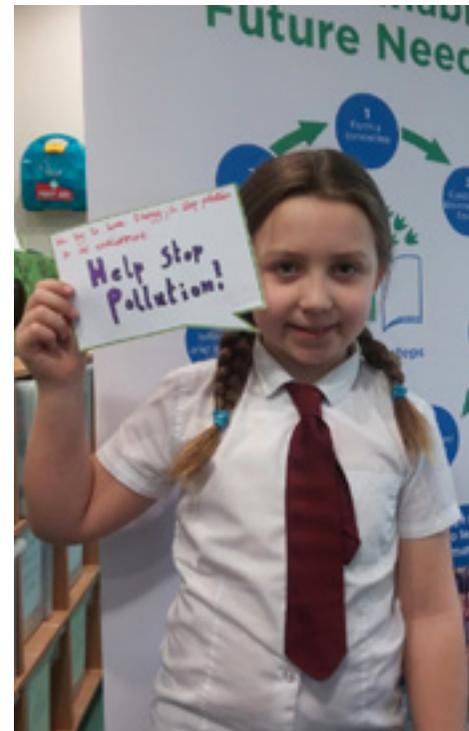
Attending the conference left me asking myself some difficult questions, such as how do we ensure the full potential of Eco-Schools is being reached? How do we make it transformative beyond the best performing Green Flag schools? And how can it play a more active role in developing tomorrow's leaders.

Eco-Schools Consultative Committee

Marine litter is a serious issue and it is reflective of a general malaise that has even worse consequences in terms of climate change. Shaping Eco-Schools to be more effective in growing strong well-informed leaders that can think critically and creatively and challenge the status quo in a positive manner has to be a priority.

and work with Wrigley's through Eco-Schools is currently assessing how litter programmes in schools change not only the behaviour of those involved, but also how it can be used to help challenge the behaviours of others.

The newly formed Eco-Schools Consultative Committee is a first step in the right direction.



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Reporting Marine Litter Assessments *by Michael McAliskey, Marine Scientist, DAERA*

Contact: Michael.McAliskey@daera-ni.gov.uk

“Accurate and reliable data is essential to properly manage and assess the levels of litter present in the marine environment. Data is needed to inform policy development and to evaluate progress towards meeting policy and legislative commitments such as achieving good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)” from the Northern Ireland Marine Litter Strategy 2013.

DAERA coordinates the reporting of data to address MSFD Descriptor 10 – Marine Litter.

Existing Data

Data recorded by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful volunteers on our beaches provides information on how common the different litter items or litter material categories are, e.g. plastic bags, plastic bottles and sewage related debris. This can give an indication of the sources of litter, on what litter reduction measures are needed and if measures are successful or not.

A series of Marine Litter Survey reports have been published by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. The latest report on a series of surveys undertaken by volunteers during the period autumn 2012 to December 2016 is available here. <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/litter-beaches-northern-ireland-2014>

Where does our data go?

OSPAR is the name of the International Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic. It derives from the earlier Oslo and Paris Conventions and both the UK and Ireland are Contracting Parties to the Convention along with 13 other countries. The OSPAR Commission has designed

and prepared monitoring guidelines in order to provide a tool to improve our knowledge and understanding of marine litter. Data collected in Northern Ireland is fed into the OSPAR database.

The recent OSPAR assessment describes the abundance and composition of beach litter across 76 beaches in 2014 - 15, and trends in litter items that have been identified across 19 beaches in the period 2009–2014.

<https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/intermediate-assessment-2017/pressures-human-activities/marine-litter/beach-litter/>



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Contact: Michael.McAliskey@daera-ni.gov.uk

What is it used for?

Beach litter composition gives an indication of the scale and magnitude of the problem, as well as the level of threat to the environment. Spatial differences in litter composition between survey sites indicate regional differences in sources, where reduction measures are needed and, when implemented, the extent of their success.

Future trends

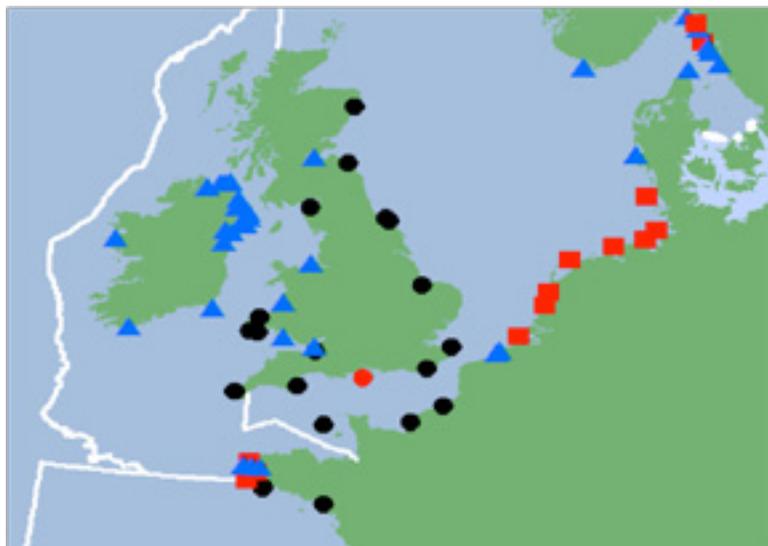
Although there were significant changes in the amount of litter recorded on survey sites between 2009 and 2014, there are no general trends across all survey sites. An increase in the amount of data via more surveys, will improve knowledge of marine litter on the North-East Atlantic coast with regard to abundance, composition and especially future trends.

How are we addressing marine litter?

Measures in the OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter are aimed at reducing litter and so should lead to a reduction of beach litter. If successful, measures targeting litter from fishing activities and measures targeting packaging should have the greatest impact on the amount of marine litter. In some regions, measures targeting wastewater outlets and smoking-related litter could have significant effects on the amount of litter recorded on coasts.

Thank you to our volunteers

Northern Ireland has one of the most complete datasets in terms of volume and coverage, and this would not be possible without the contribution of volunteer groups locally. The information you gather on quantities and trends is essential in targeting appropriate action.



Beach litter monitoring points from the OSPAR Intermediate 2017 Assessment

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Summer 2017 eXXpedition around UK waters *by Sue Weaver, eXXpedition Co-leader*

Contact: suemweaver@yahoo.co.uk

On 8th August our eXXpedition set sail from Plymouth on the Sea Dragon bound for Cardiff, our first stop on the voyage around the UK. On board was an all-female crew of scientists, artists, students and business women.

Stop-over in Belfast

The Sea Dragon arrived in Belfast for a brief visit on 14th August. In spite of heavy rain, several of us immediately set off on a beach clean with Jodie-Ann McAneaney of Keep Northern

Ireland Beautiful and their amazing volunteers. At a spot on Larne Lough, close to the mouth of the Inver River, we picked up 55 bags of rubbish in 90 minutes.

Plastic crinkling under our feet

We were horrified by the sound of plastic crinkling under our feet, hidden beneath the tall grass. Keep

Northern Ireland Beautiful and their volunteer teams do an amazing job of cleaning up around Northern Ireland, but the sooner we all come to our senses and stop using a long lasting material like plastic for throwaway purposes the better.

Need for action on single use plastics

We believe that to combat plastic and toxic pollution there needs to be action taken across all sectors of society and globally, too. In the words of my fellow voyager, and co-founder of eXXpedition Emily Penn, "We are campaigning for upstream solutions, particularly for single-use packaging. We are asking industry to rethink and redesign products, government to legislate solutions, and you and I, as consumers, to make good choices to use less plastic."



Larne Lough Clean Up

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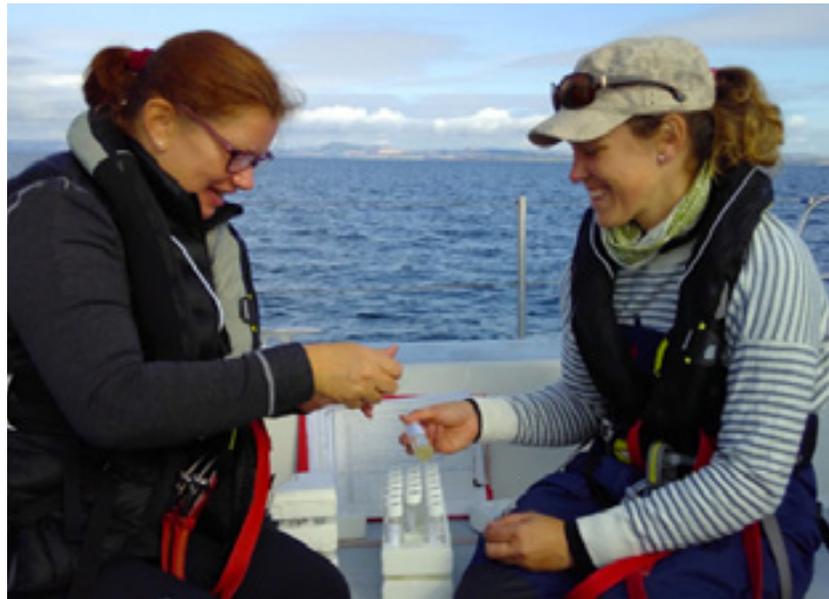
Contact: suemweaver@yahoo.co.uk

Citizen Science

While at sea, we took every opportunity to trawl for plastics of different sizes, from almost invisible to absolutely microscopic. That is, whenever the weather calmed down enough to sail at less than 6 knots! In total we travelled 2035 nautical miles and collected nearly 100 scientific samples for further analysis. Microplastic particles were found in all areas tested throughout the journey. Our initial observations while collecting the samples are that there is considerable plastic pollution in UK waters. This appears to be particularly apparent in areas of higher population.

Samples

The resulting collection of samples have been sent to different laboratories in the UK and USA for analysis and the data will take a while to come through. This will form the first snapshot of the state of plastics



pollution in our seas ever taken in a month and will be available from our [website](#).

Return to base

We continued to clean up beaches all the way around the UK, and everywhere found the same story; of large pieces, food packaging was the most common, followed by

polystyrene bits and then drinks lids and containers. After 28 days at sea and outreach events in 6 ports, our voyage ended back in Plymouth on 4 September. A Sky documentary on our voyage is available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xZ77JGDOs&feature=youtu.be>

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