

MARINE LITTER WATCH



Image credit "Whiterocks, Co. Antrim" copyright Arthur Ward

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Welcome and introduction by Damian Campbell, Director of DOE, Marine Division



Welcome to the first edition of “Marine Litter Watch”. This newsletter is one of the ways we will be keeping you informed of progress in implementing the Marine Litter Strategy. The Strategy is all about partnership, with government, community groups and industry working together to address the blight of marine

litter.

Marine Division was created last year to bring together DOE’s marine responsibilities, such as marine planning, licensing, conservation and monitoring. We are responsible for protecting and promoting the sustainable use of our coast and seas.

Our role in the Marine Litter Strategy is to provide coordination and help support you in implementing the Strategy. We are interested in working with people in other Administrations and in the south to share experiences and to learn from the work being undertaken.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the “Marine Litter Watch”. This edition covers all the strands of the Strategy and articles have provided from the marine litter community.

- Jim Allen leads with an article on Coleraine Council’s “leave only foot prints” initiative, this tackles the problem of marine

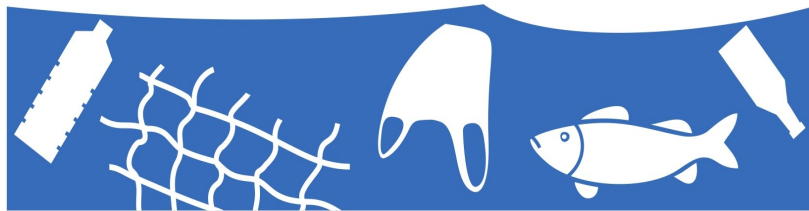
litter by providing information directly on the beach.

- Graham Yarr discusses the innovative combination of education and statutory deterrents developed by North Down Council in partnership with PSNI, Translink and NIEA to prevent littering.
- Chris Allen from Tidy NI describes how he has undertaken the first systematic survey of beach litter in Northern Ireland and the benefits it has brought to local communities.
- Philip Thompson from Larne Council explains why the council is using “big belly” compactor bins and how this is benefiting the environment.
- Eric Rainey leads on strand 2, with an article explaining the way Cloughey residents have taken responsibility for the removal of litter from their coast; how their hard work has been recognised at Clean Coast Awards and why the beach consistently is winning Pilot Green Coast Awards.

We open with an article from Tom Doyle, from University College Cork, on the EU’s MARLISCO project. Tom is the Irish representative on Steering Group and his article gives a flavour of the ground breaking work being undertaken.

Finally I would like to invite you to submit ideas for future editions of the newsletter.

MARLISCO



Stopping Marine Litter Together

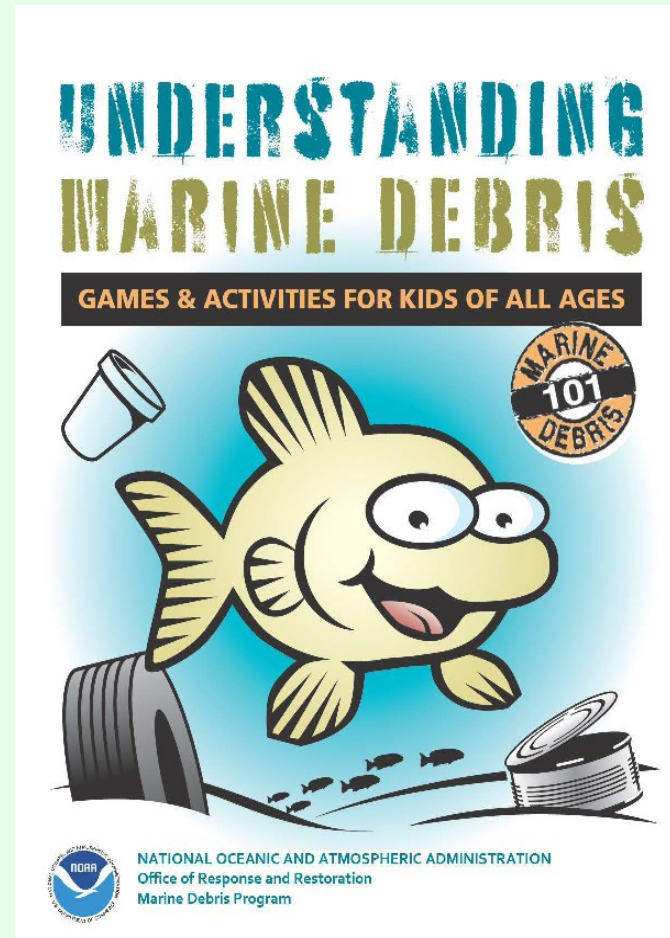
What is MARLISCO?

'Marine Litter in Europe's Seas: Social Awareness and Co-responsibility (MARLISCO)' is an European Union funded Science in Society Project (2012-2015) that seeks to raise public awareness, and achieve a joint vision for the sustainable management of marine litter across the four regional seas of Europe; the north east Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Baltic and the Black Sea.

Who we are?

Members of MARLISCO include local authorities, researchers, NGOs, producers, recyclers and multimedia companies. In total there 20 entities from 15 countries participating in MARLISCO.

I am the Irish representative and I am based at the Coastal & Marine Research Centre, University College Cork. The UK is represented by two partners, CEFAS (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) and Plymouth University.



MARLISCO is developing a series of activities to inform, engage and empower people across 14 coastal countries and the four Regional Seas of Europe. Activities will include:

- An international survey to evaluate the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders regarding marine litter. This is being undertaken by the Plymouth University and I would like to thank you for taking part in this. The survey ends July 31st 2013.
- A European video contest for youngsters to inspire change. I would encourage you to make schools in our area aware of this and encourage participation. The competition is aimed at children between the ages of 7 and 18 years and launches on September 9th. Further information on the competition including instructions on how to compete is available from <http://www.marlisco.eu/video-contest.en.html>.
- A series of national forums across 12 countries to increase the awareness of the gravity of the marine litter problem and to clearly illustrate that it is an important environmental, social and economic issue. The Forum will allow the general public and interested stakeholders to 'have their say' in developing solutions to the marine litter problem. The Irish forum will be held in Dublin in April 2014. The event will be streamed live to allow groups to watch and participate in the forum and breakout sessions on-line. I would welcome input from Northern Ireland and will liaise with Marine Division to keep

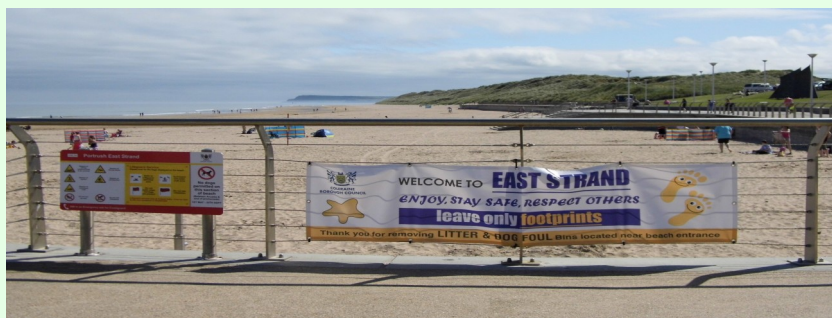
you involved.

- A wealth of awareness and educational tools and activities including pedagogical materials for schools, workshops, e-games and a web-documentary. These include games for children of all ages and are available from <http://www.marlisco.eu/education.en.html>.
- Tailor made national activities including workshops, festivals and a national marine litter exhibition which our colleagues in Greece are leading. The exhibition will contain examples of marine litter and will be touring Ireland in 2014. I will keep you updated on plans for this and how you can get involved.
- The collection of best practices in dealing with the marine litter issue from all partner countries.
- A scoping study of the sources and trends regarding marine litter in each regional sea

I welcome the range of measures being undertaken in Northern Ireland and look forward to your participation in MARLISCO.



LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS by Jim Allen, Environment Officer, Coleraine BC



Coleraine Borough Council continues to appeal to its many thousands of beach visitors every year to only leave their footprints behind when they conclude their visit.

Every year Council has to foot a large bill in cleaning up after those who spoil the north coast's beautiful beaches by leaving their waste behind. But there is another hidden cost in wildlife injuries and deaths. Everything from half burnt disposable barbecues (including food waste) and the remains of beer parties to food wrappers and drinks cartons and much, much more is seen as unnecessary pollution of one of our greatest natural assets. This is in spite of bins being made available at and around beach entrances. Many people simply continue to leave more than their footprints in the sand, some of which floats off into the sea on the next high tide.

I have made a personal 20 year study of the impacts of beach litter and marine debris and regularly delivers colourful illustrated talks on the harm caused by such waste by working

closely with Council's beach management team to raise public awareness. With simply worded and colourful little banners greeting people as the access and leave the beach I attract peoples' attention and appeal to their common sense. We all love our beaches but we often forget that they are living habitats and not some concreted, easily swept high street. When we trash the sand and the sea, there's not only a considerable effort to recover the waste but a potentially harmful threat to all manner of marine and coastal wildlife".

I think it is important to remember that even if all around you is being littered by less environmentally friendly beach goers, you can take some degree of pride in ensuring that the area of beach that you occupied contains only your happy footprints. My approach is not to patrol the beaches this summer with a book of litter penalty tickets rather it is to educate beach users of all ages in responsible behaviour. I I be making a number of appearances with a small portable exhibition of weird and harmful objects recovered from the beaches over the years. So keep an eye out for this beach guardian and remember footprints only please!

Further details contact jim.allen@colerainebc.gov.uk or www.colerainebc.gov.uk 0787 651 6032

Summer 2013 - Work Programme in North Down by Graham Yarr, Director of Environmental Services, North Down BC

As you can imagine, with the recent good weather, North Down has experienced a significant influx of day trippers and tourists, which is obviously very welcome. However, this has created problems in terms of dealing with littering and dog fouling which have the potential to negatively impact on the environment, including our beaches.

This year we have taken a more pro-active approach to public education and enforcement, with the following initiatives:

- A bus and bus shelter advertising campaign in conjunction with Ards Borough Council to tackle littering and dog fouling.



(Councillor Peter Martin with Sergeant Bob Harris and North Down BC waste manager Barry Johnston at Ballyholme Beach)

- A joint initiative with PSNI, Translink and NIEA to tackle anti-social behaviour and littering associated with large influxes of young people onto our beaches in periods of exceptionally good weather. Regular joint patrolling of known hotspots and sharing of information between PSNI and Council officers to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- The introduction of Dog Control Orders, which apply throughout the Borough and some of which apply to our beaches, specifically Ballyholme and Groomsport (see below).
- The employment of two additional wardens over the summer months, whose main task is to raise public awareness on environmental issues and carry out enforcement work. I am pleased to say that their detection rate so far has been exceptionally good and between them and our established officers, Council has issued over 100 fixed penalties for littering and dog fouling during the months of May and June. This success rate has been achieved through more flexible working patterns and intelligent use of resources.
- We have recently deployed a CCTV camera primarily to address littering and dog fouling offences in local neighbourhoods which appears to have had a strong deterrent effect and we are about to acquire a second camera.

Summer 2013 - Work Programme in North Down, by Graham Yarr (Director of Environmental Services)

We have introduced the following Dog Control Orders :

- **Fouling of land by Dogs Order;**
- **Dog Exclusion (Playgrounds) Order;**
- **Dogs on Leads (Beaches) Order-** This order will apply to parts of Ballyholme and Groomsport Beaches from 1 June to 31 August each year and between the hours of 11am and 8pm. Dog owners will be required to keep their dogs on a lead (maximum length two meters) on these beaches and during the times stated in the Order; and
- **Dogs on leads by direction (Park & Playing Fields) Order.**

The maximum penalty for breaching a Dog Control Order will be a fine of up to £1,000 or the issue of a Fixed Penalty fine of £80; this fine will be reduced to £50 if paid within 10 days.

Hopefully we can consolidate and build on the success achieved so far.



Northern Ireland Beach Litter Survey, by Chris Allen, Tidy Northern Ireland

A better understanding of the nature and extent of the litter in the seas around our coast is vital in developing a successful strategy for tackling it. Indeed, the Department of the Environment's objective of delivering "an overall reduction in the numbers of visible litter items within specific categories/types on the coastlines" is meaningless without an understanding of how much there to start with.

In order to plug this gap in our knowledge the Department has begun to measure the amount of litter on our beaches. Working with the environmental charity TIDY Northern Ireland, 14 beaches were chosen as reference sites for the first systematic survey of beach litter ever undertaken in Northern Ireland. These beaches are representative of the whole coast, with examples of popular recreation beaches, remote strands, pebble beaches and beaches adjacent to fishing harbours all included.

During the first three surveys, which took place between September 2012 and March 2013, an average of 4,033 individual pieces of litter was observed per kilometre of beach. There was considerable variability in the amounts and types of litter observed, but plastic litter accounted for almost three quarters of all the litter observed. Bits of string were the most common

single type of litter, with an average of 462 pieces observed per kilometre. The survey was carried out using the OSPAR methodology, which has been adopted across Europe, and allows the data collected to be directly compared with places as far apart as Oslo and Porto.



After each survey, teams of volunteers removed as much of the litter as possible from the beaches. This means that as well as increasing our understanding of marine litter, the survey has made a real difference, removing hundreds of bags of rubbish. This approach provides an "opportunity to engage the local community and encourage local people to take ownership and pride in their wonderful surroundings" Roisin Maguire, Ballyhornan Residents Association It makes local people an integral part of the process. "We have been welcomed into the local school to talk about the beach, the problem of littering and related environmental issues, and have been really heartened by the subsequent participation in the beach cleanups by local children and families."

Such engagement, on a wider scale, is essential if we are to change the way people behave towards their environment and reduce the litter currently being deposited daily into our seas.

Larne Council Install Solar Powered Big Belly Bins, by Philip Thompson, Director of Environmental Services , Larne BC



Big belly bin with the amount of material it can hold, Chief Executive Geraldine Mc Gahey, Director of Environmental Services Philip Thompson and former Deputy Mayor Cllr Mark Dunn

In 2009 local Councillors raised concerns about the type of bins deployed within the Borough and in particular beside the coastal area as seagulls were continually scavenging in bins and pulling the litter onto the greens and roadways. It was also evident that on bank or public holidays or on days of really good weather that bin capacity in scenic tourist areas was not sufficient to cope with the demand.

With this in mind Council staff identified the solar powered big belly bin which was constructed in such a way that birds or vermin could not access the rubbish and which also offered 6-8 times the capacity than normal bins. In addition with the use of telemetry the Council staff could be notified when the bin was 50%, 85% and 100% full.

Although the bins were expensive a case was made for funding through the Rural Development Program – Tourism Category and the Council were successful in securing 75% funding for 19 bins.

Having installed these bins and realising how good they were a further application was made to install a further 17 bins. In addition funding was found within Town Centre Development budgets to install these bins in key town centre locations.

There was scepticism among some staff initially, as it was viewed as an attempt to save manpower and when the bins were launched there was one incident of sheer vandalism where people went out of there way to set them on fire. So it is important to make sure they are insured—but having overcome these difficulties staff are now embracing their use as they see the advantages and how it helps to ensure proper facilities are in place to cope with peak demand.

Staff are now seeing the benefit of not continually having to empty bins and ensure their time is better spent litter picking. The efficiency of the bins has now moved from 10% to over 90% efficiency. The telemetry and reporting system has helped everyone assess how we are doing this job and helped ensure staff time is directed to doing the right job and not just emptying bins for the sake of emptying bins.

Larne Council were the first Council within the UK to install these bins but many other Councils have now commenced a roll out including York and Bournemouth.

Cloughey District and Community Association's Environmental Record, by Eric Rainey.



Cloughey District & Community Association's (CDAC's) proactive environmental engagement began in 2008 and continues to this day. Our group works closely with Tidy Northern Ireland and other agencies to enhance the beautiful beach and dunes grassland system at Cloughey. We also promote its appeal as an amenity for locals and tourists and believe it is worthy of protection.

We have won a number of awards including:

- the Group Award, Programme Achievement Award and Coastal Custodians of the Year Award in 2009;
- the Coastal Custodian Award in 2010; and
- three Pilot Green Coast Awards for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Despite these awards the CDCA's enthusiasm and commitment still have not waned in the pursuit of both a local and Regional Government official recognition of Cloughey having an amenity beach.

Each member of the Beach Care Group makes regular litter collections on "their" stretch of the beach in pursuit of our goal of being "the cleanest beach in Northern Ireland". We are delighted that our litter management plan has responded well to the test of the 2013 July spell of brilliant weather when the beach was extremely busy every day! Our sea water quality tests were excellent during June and July.

Our hard work, dedication and commitment to sourcing funding, boosted by support from TIDY Northern Ireland has ensured that the stretch of water at the beach has been tested for water quality over the past four seasons. Our water quality has been excellent and the testing and results have raised the profile of the beach with residents, regular visitors and local traders who depend on visitors for a large part of their livelihood.

Cloughey District and Community Association's Environmental Record, by Eric Rainey.

Having the water quality tested has also allowed Cloughey Beach to be a pilot Green Coast Award beach in TIDY Northern Ireland's Good Beaches programme in 2011, 2012 and 2013. This award is for beaches that meet "excellent bathing water quality" but which are also prized for their natural, unspoiled environment.

We participated in the TIDY NI/DOE Marine Litter winter recording programme-the subject of an article by Chris Allen, the Tidy NI Big Spring Clean, Clean Coast Week and the MCS Beachwatch Big Weekend.

We have organised and promoted various successful beach events and are participating in the Strangford Lough and Lecale Coastal Guardian Initiative. Our 2013 summer programme includes moth trapping and identification, wildflower and beach walks and will culminate with the 2013 Sand Castle/Sculpture Event to be held on 17 August.

We are active in the Good Beach Summits and the Strangford/Lecale River Basin Stakeholders group and are committed to ensuring our community is involved in a sustainable environmental future for Northern Ireland.

And finally

We hope you enjoyed reading "Marine Litter Watch" and found the articles helpful and informative. We would appreciate your ideas and articles for future editions.

We will updating our marine litter webpage soon, so please send us in any images you have of either marine litter or what our beautiful beaches can look like when the debris has been removed.

Please send your ideas and images to :

marineteam@doeni.gov.uk

To finish here are some events your diary.

Event	Date
Tidy up-East Strand, Portrush	3 August
River Discovery Day, Rivers Agency premises Prehen, Derry	16 August
Cloughey Sand Castle and Sculpture Day	17 August
Coast Care Awards, Stormont	17 October
Tidy NI Litter Conference, Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey	13 November