

All Ireland Coastwatch Survey

Sept 15th – Oct 15th, 2022

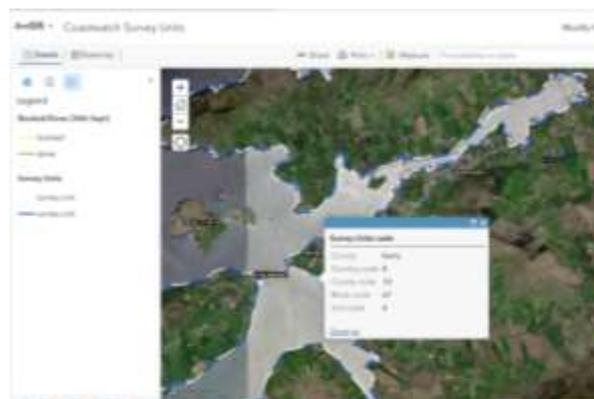
IN 5 STEPS

1. Find a suitable survey area on the [Coastwatch Map](#)

1.1 Zoom in to your area on the map and **click on** one of the blue or white lines, each denoting a 500 meter 'survey unit' or su. The clicked-on area turns turquoise, and an ID code pops up. Note that ID code on the survey form in **question A1**.

Nb - If there are no blue or white lines, as in the case of some islands, it means it hasn't been included in the survey so far. Be the first. Contact us to ask for it to be digitized too.

1.2 Take a photo of the map so you know exactly where your su starts and ends. Include adjacent units especially if they contain your access point or landmarks.



If in a hurry to get out, jump straight to step 2, otherwise

1.3 Book your survey area by completing the [online booking form](#). Add any requests like **nitrate test kits** for use on inflows entering your survey unit(s) from land. The s.u. will then be marked as 'booked' in orange. This is a manual step carried out within 48 hours starting from Sept 6th. Please mail survey@coastwatch.org if your survey unit does not appear booked on the map.

2. Get materials

Find a place with wifi to download materials for print, or store on your phone.

2.1 Download the **Coastwatch survey questionnaire**. If surveying for the first time, print a copy (or ask Coastwatch for a hard copy).

NB - You can fit data from 2 surveys onto 1 form by using different colour biros for info on each. Some surveyors go directly to the data input form and complete the survey online while on the shore. Best to bring a hard copy as fall back.

2.2 Download relevant Coastwatch nature **ID posters** onto your phone, or open a given poster on your computer and then photograph it or get hard copy.

2.3 Download any of the **free apps** www.coastwatch.org/europe/apps-we-use . If you have other apps you find useful, please tell us. Our present list includes: The Coastwatch designed **Micro litter app**, an **Eyeonwater App** for water colour and transparency recording, created in an international scientific team including Coastwatch scientists, A **stream obstacle app** to record fish barriers which make it difficult for fish to get from the sea upstream. A UK **plant app** to help you identify and record invasive alien plant species.

2.4 Read Survey **Guide Notes**. Its handy to also **download them** onto your phone.

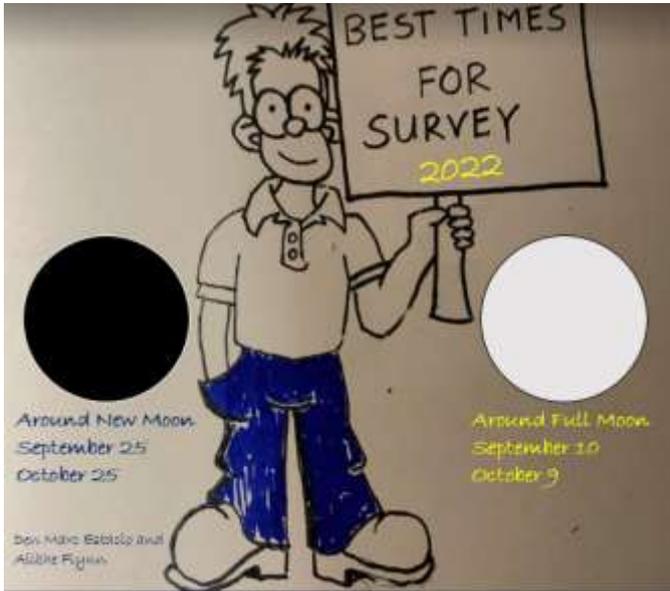
ALERTS and FOCUS

- **Bird flu** is spreading across Europe, especially colonial breeding seabirds. Avian influenza has been reported recently in the Netherlands, Scotland, Iceland, Norway, France, and Greece (EFSA, 2022) You might find sick or dead birds on the shore you are surveying. Please help track and avoid spread of this avian influenza virus by reading up on it and what you can do. (DAFFM and DAERA in Ireland). There is also a report app <https://aviancheck.apps.rhos.agriculture.gov.ie>
- **COVID and the new Single Use Plastic Law are changing our marine litter load**. The extra page related to COVID and single use plastic litter is included once more so that, with your support we will have data for **2020** when COVID just hit wet wipes and masks were everywhere, **2021** when masks were still used in most settings and now **2022** when COVID is still around, but masks are rarely used outside. The results for the 3 years will be published in December.
- **Inflows:** Water flowing from land into the sea includes desirable streams hosting lots of life and used by protected fish like eel, seatrout and lamprey. In this 2022 survey we are hoping you might capture more stream information. The

healthiest and the miserable ones. If your su has a stream, is it shown on [EPA maps](#) with quality status? Check it out. Also ask Coastwatch for **nitrate test kits for inflows**.

3. Plan your Survey

3.1 **Time:** Check tide table for suitable **low tides** e.g. on <http://bit.do/tidetime>.



big waves.

- Spring tides: Three days around **full and new moon** are when you expect to catch the lowest tides. If you can survey then, you are likely to find interesting biota normally covered by the sea – e.g. a *Zostera marina* seagrass meadow.

- Plan to start surveying ~ an hour before low tide.

- Check weather forecast to avoid rain, heavy swell, and

3.2 Logistics: Plan how to get there and meeting point if surveying with others. Can you get to your survey unit by foot or bike? If by car, can you give lifts and plan a few drop off pick up points to cover a larger area which might feature as case study?

3.5 Pack survey forms, biros, well charged phone with camera, a zip sandwich bag type plastic bag &/or yogurt bucket to collect interesting materials. Take boots, or dive shoes, layers of clothes, a hanky and rain gear with you. Where relevant a COVID mask. If an inflow from land is entering your su then try to get nitrate/nitrite test sticks and colour chart. If you don't have them to hand, or are surveying with friends you might all test afterwards together. Each one takes a small clean empty water bottle to collect the water and labels it. Then in meeting after finishing the survey each one tests and all tests are recorded by photo and on forms. This is also ideal for doing extra tests where only one colour chart is available.

Planning to survey with a school, scout or family group? You could divide the survey questions between you before you go out and just distribute relevant pages - see Group Surveying Hints page.

GROUP Surveying Hints

Talk about the survey beforehand. Chose a survey unit, download the questionnaire and prepare. Check if inflows present, as they feature in task assignment. Then assign survey questions to group members so they can focus on a few questions at a time and spread out on the shore. Any gathering on the shore should take weather into account. On a windy day, seek shelter, move to keep warm.

The example below can be used as template and group member names added. It is based on a group of 6 students surveying one survey unit in \pm 1 hour. In the first 10 min. the 6 are in 2 groups. In the second slot they all work independently. In the last slot they all work together. Allow more time on a super site with several inflows, boulders, rocks and mud in between and quadruple the enjoyment. If planning to cover several survey units, start with the simplest one.

Time	Form	Surveyors	Task/Survey section	Names of those allocated to the task
	Page 1	All at home	All complete first part before going out. Finish together on arrival or at the end.	
First 10 min Zig zag brisk walk to end of su	Page 2	2 surveyors share page	<u>B Hinterland and inflows</u> : if stream present: 1 tests water, one records & also lifts stones to check for life. one photographs, checking stream banks for invasive alien species.	
	Page 3	2 surveyors share page	<u>C section and D1 and 2</u> : both scout the shore and report. One acts as the scribe, other takes photographs	
	Page 3	2 surveyors share page	<u>D 3 plants</u> and <u>D 4 IAS</u> , one is scribe, both or either photograph They may also start on animals in D 4 & 5.	
15 min Zig zag walk back	Page 4 Page 4 Page 4 Page 4 Page 4 Page 7	6 work individually	<u>Litter and Oil</u> : 1 checks for biggest E 1 and smallest E4 1 Counts E2 first column drinks litter 1 counts E 2 second column of items 1 checks E 3 general litter (<u>tick</u> not count) 1 covers E 4 and 5 area most littered. 1 covers extra COVID and SUP Directive. <u>+ Anyone</u> who has time looks out for micro litter. Use the micro litter app.	

30 min	Page 5 & 6	All together	<u>Shore life</u> D 5 + Extra page all together <u>Reflective F page</u> (+ finish and page 1)	Scribe 1 first 10 min: Scribe 2
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4. Arrived on site ready to Survey

If COVID is lurking COVID distance reminder: your out stretched arms should not touch. If coming closer – e.g. for special finds or photos put your masks on.



4.1 Scout it out on arrival:

Have a **quiet scout** first. Any animals around which should not be disturbed – e.g. a seal pup? Brent geese favorite food is **seagrass**. If you see the geese, watch where they feed.

Is the tide as you predicted? If unsure place a stick/stone at the water's edge and check a few minutes later. If the tide is just turning or coming in, start surveying at the water's edge, working up the shore. Otherwise work down.

4.2 Notice, Assess and React wisely to problems:



Something worrying or illegal going on? **A quick response can prevent or minimize harm.** Photograph, report to the relevant authority quickly and keep tabs of your action and reactions. Call Coastwatch if in doubt – 086 8111 684 or text survey@coastwatch.org.

A dead or dying bird may have bird flu but could have died of other causes. Don't touch it to be sure. Follow Bird flu advice orange box page 2. Are there any **jellyfish** in water or on shore? Most are harmless to us but avoid the Lion's mane and the jellyfish-like Portuguese man of war as they can sting even when beached!

4.3 Survey

Complete the survey form while zigzagging the shore. Take lots of photos. NB - Some experienced Coastwatchers just use their photos and phone notes in the field, then complete on line. We advise to use a hard copy form at first.



Stream Note: If your site includes a stream, put some time into discovering it.

Exploring a stream with lots of life can be a brilliant experience, but wear gloves and avoid damaging it. Think of a stream bed like a village where every stone is a house. Creatures live here. If lifting stones, gently put them back. Mobile animals you might net like fish, shrimp or crabs are best put into a big plastic bag (see



boy holding one with a juvenile fish he caught). The water magnifies your find. Take a close look and photograph. Put all animals back to where you found them **within minutes**.

5. Data and Picture return:

Input your survey results online, or post to Coastwatch, Civil Engineering, TCD, D2

- [Survey Questionnaire – Input Form](#) This is the main survey form

Pictures can now be uploaded directly with your survey form, but also afterwards when you get the confirmation email telling you what you have entered.



If you prefer pictures can still be emailed to survey@coastwatch.org (but then make sure you indicate survey site and if we are to attribute these pictures to you or not)

AFTERWARDS

Your data will be put together with that of other surveyors, analysed and mapped to compare to and add to official data. If you found something very special like a new seagrass bed, we will get in touch for verification.

Result high and low lights will be published in early December and you will be notified if you left contact details. Otherwise watch social media.

Hopefully we will be able to see you in a results meeting in Trinity College Dublin to celebrate our joint citizen science work and discuss how data and other findings can best be used to protect and restore our coast.

An exhibition of **Marine Life, Litter and Pollution - 3 decades of Coastwatching'** was planned in May 2020 hosted by Grace O Sullivan MEP in Brussels. Due to **COVID it had to be postponed**. We will keep you informed on any updates.

If you have a proposal for follow up action, an idea for an event, or exhibition please shout.

Any Questions?

Please email survey@coastwatch.org, or your regional coordinator (see table) or use our [Facebook](#) page.

Regional Coordinators are giving their time and expertise. Most are not able to incorporate it into their jobs. They are volunteers too. They have:

- a small stock of hard copy of forms, posters and test kits
- they might be organising or helping you to organise a local survey training event or blitz so a whole area can be covered.
- they may know your coast, but they aren't God.

Acknowledgements:

This citizen science project is based on volunteer work at all levels. And huge thank you to all for support - whether its surveying, passing on the word, holding test kits and acting as regional coordinators.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge support from the Marine Unit of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local government who are supporting select technical, data analyses and admin work, purchase of materials, printing and training events.

FURTHER INFORMATION survey@coastwatch.org

International coordinator: Karin Dubsy 00353 (0)86 8111 684

Technical/GIS & web: Ángel Duarte Campos and Kevin Lynch

Social Media: Bernie Connolly, CEF



Regional Coordinators listed overleaf