

# All Ireland Coastwatch Survey

Sept 15th – Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

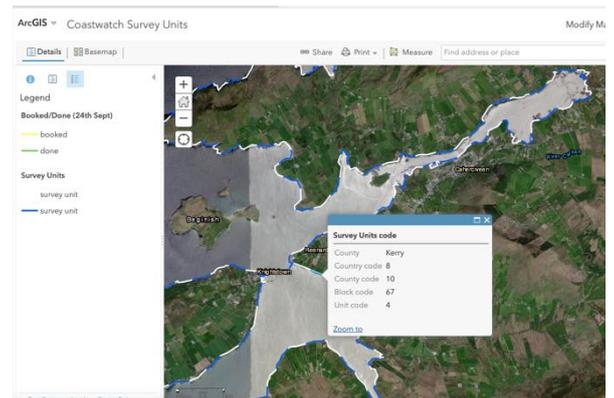
## IN 5 STEPS

### 1. Find a 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'. The clicked-on area turns turquoise and an ID code pops up. Note that ID code on the survey form in **question A1**.

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.

**1.2** Take a photo of the map so you know exactly where it starts and ends, when you go out to the shore. Check for any 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 fresh water entering your survey unit(s). The s.u. will then be marked as 'booked' in orange in a manual step within 48 hours. If not, mail Angel on [survey@coastwatch.org](mailto:survey@coastwatch.org) in case something went wrong.

## 2. Get materials

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

**2.1** Click on the **Coastwatch survey questionnaire** If doing it first time, print 1 Questionnaire copy (or getting hard copy from Coastwatch). You can fit data from 2 sites onto 1 form by using different colour biros to enter your information. Some surveyors complete the survey on line while on the shore by going directly to the data input form. But its best to have one fall back hard copy.

**2.2** Look at the different nature **ID posters** on our website and download them onto your phone (or photograph the given poster when it is open on your computer)

Consult the Survey Guide Notes when reading through the questions.

### EXTRAS

#### **COVID and the new Single Use Plastic Law will change marine litter.**

Our new last page of the Coastwatch survey form is to pick this up. If you don't have enough time to complete a whole survey, (or another whole survey as the tide is coming in), but want to contribute to this, just complete the first and last page of the survey form. We will have a separate international analyses of this section.

**Test Inflow water Q B2:** If you have a stream entering your survey unit you might check it out in more detail. Even small streams can be important to our most endangered and protected fish species like eel, salmon, seatrout and lamprey.

Ask Coastwatch for **nitrate test kits** and scout for own extra tests:

Download the **free apps** [www.coastwatch.org/europe/apps-we-use](http://www.coastwatch.org/europe/apps-we-use)

- 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 identify and record invasive alien plant species.

### 3. Plan your Survey (with COVID precautions)

**3.1** Find out when low tide is – e.g. on <http://bit.do/tidetime>.

**3.2** Plan to start surveying ~ an hour before low tide. Spring tides are best to catch a glimpse of really interesting low shore where you might see a seagrass bed *Zostera marina* exposed.

**3.3** Check weather forecast to avoid rain, heavy swell or high waves.

**3.4** Plan how to get there and meeting point. This may seem obvious but just to be sure to be sure to minimise COVID risks:

- Can you get to your survey unit by foot or bike and avoid public transport? If you are car sharing, do it with your household.
- If surveying with a friend arrange a point to meet at/near the shore.

**3.5 Pack** survey forms, biros, well charged phone, camera, a sandwich bag type plastic bag &/or yogurt bucket to identify and collect interesting materials.

Take boots, or dive shoes, layers of clothes, a hanky and rain gear with you.

COVID gear: hand sanitizer and mask. A small rucksack is useful to keep your hands free.

If there is an inflow then extra materials like nitrate/nitrite test sticks (or empty water bottle to test the water later) see Survey step 4 stream note.



**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. Don't forget a pen for each surveyor. It's easier to write with clip boards.

(see Group Surveying Hints page)

## GROUP Surveying Hints

Talk about the survey beforehand. Chose a survey unit, download the questionnaire and prepare by looking at the map online so you know what features to expect. Streams are important for 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 and 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 work in 2 groups. In the second slot they all work independently in the third they all work together. Where you have several inflows, amazing boulders, rocks and mud in between allow more time 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.	
10 min  Zig zag brisk walk to end of survey unit	Page 2	2 surveyors share page	<u>Hinterland and inflows</u> : testing water, one to lift stones in stream to check for life. photographing, 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 and 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	6 work individually	<u>Litter and Oil</u> : 1 checks for biggest E 1 and smallest E4	
	Page 4		1 Counts E2 first column drinks litter	
	Page 4		1 counts E 2 second column of items	
	Page 4		1 checks E 3 general litter ( <u>tick</u> not count)	
	Page 4		1 covers E 4 and 5 area most littered.	
	Page 7		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

## 4. Arrived on site ready to Survey

A COVID 2m distance reminder: your out stretched arms should not touch.

If coming closer – e.g. if one photographs as the other lifts a stone, then put your masks on.



### 4.1 Scout it out:

- Have a **quick quiet look** first. Any animals around which might be disturbed? Can you get a quick photo? If you see Brent geese feeding, that area could be worth checking out for seagrass, but can you do so with least disturbance?
- **Is the tide as you predicted?** If unsure place a stick/stone at the edge while you continue your scout to see. If the tide is coming in, hurry and start at the water's edge, working up the shore.
- Are there any **jellyfish** like lion's mane in water or on the tideline which have strong stings (even after being beached!) If yes give a touch warning to pals.

### 4.2 Survey

Complete the survey form while zigzagging the shore and covering all sections. Take lots of photos. Some Coastwatchers report later using their photos.

If short of time: A and B1 questions can be written up in advance/later.



Did you see something worrying, dangerous or illegal? **A quick response can prevent harm or assure restoration.** Contact the relevant authority immediately or call Coastwatch if in doubt.

**Stream Note:** Can you find a net? What about a lab, soil or garden thermometer?



Do you have any pH sticks as used for aquariums and possibly Phosphate tests? Look up [www.catchment.ie](http://www.catchment.ie) for information on your stream.

Exploring a stream with lots of life can be a brilliant experience, but make sure you have enough preparation and support, to 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 pic of the boy holding one with a juvenile fish he caught). The water magnifies your find. Take a close look and photographs. Then 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

or 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](mailto:survey@coastwatch.org) (but then make sure you indicate survey site and if we are to attribute these pictures to you or not)



Did you see something which you think is worrying, dangerous or illegal?

**If it needs a quick response**, please contact the relevant authority immediately and copy Coastwatch in or call us if in doubt.

### 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 by Christmas and you will be notified if you left contact details.

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 to 2021. It may be part virtual and part in the Parliament and is to include extra 2020 survey data on the state of our coast and trends, as well as links to key legislation and innovative ways of implementing new law like the SUP Directive.

So all Coastwatch countries, we need your case study areas, stories photos and a set of asks. You will hear more over coming months

## Any Questions?

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

### Regional Coordinators have:

- a small stock of hard copy of forms, posters and test kits
- they know people and might be organizing or helping you to organize a local survey 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, except for select technical work, materials and training where funds are secured.

We would like to acknowledge support from the Marine Unit Department of Housing, Planning and Local government.

And huge support from all who are passing on the word, holding test kits and acting as regional coordinators.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

[survey@coastwatch.org](mailto:survey@coastwatch.org)

National coordinator: Karin Dubsky 00353 (0)86 8111 684

Technical questions/GIS web issues: Ángel Duarte Campos

Social Media: Bernie Connolly, CEF

