

# Treasna na dTonnta



Welcome to issue 57 of Treasna na dTonnta



TnadT is awash with articles for this issue with both new and familiar contributors who kindly took the time and effort to write in. Thank you! We hope you enjoy the read and look forward to receiving your feedback. You can contact us at [tnadeditor@gmail.com](mailto:tnadeditor@gmail.com).

In ISKA News we have an update from Marion Ryan while East Coast Sea Kayaking Club member Dave Conroy debuts with his account of the Inishowen Sea Kayak Symposium. Lonan Byrne kindly took time to write a thoughtful review of Oileáin a Dó. Tony Walsh of East Coast Sea Kayak club writes about his experiences at a Greenland Paddling workshop in Connemara and Mary Nash contributes a welcome introduction to the concept of Leave No Trace. Mick Carroll has kindly offered an exciting account of his trip to Inishtrahull. Mick's piece is part of a much longer article he submitted about Inishowen, which we will keep for the next issue. We welcome back Alan Horner with his Tidelines column, a timely piece on climate change and coastal erosion.



Sea kayakers have an important role to play as environmental observers and recorders of the life in our sea. All of us have noticed that Jellyfish are more visible as the ecology of the waters around our shores slowly changes. In this issue we have an ID chart for you and some information about these amazing creatures.

We have made some changes to the appearance of TnadT that we hope you like and I am grateful to Adam May of East Coast Sea Kayak Club for his expertise and ideas.

I am not sure if the next issue will be so full—that is up to you because ISKA was set up by sea kayakers for sea kayakers and TnadT is generated on the same principle—it is what sea kayakers make it so if you would like to see something in TnadT—just send it in. If you would like to contribute, please do as we are always looking for photos, ideas and content.

I would like to extend a big 'Thank You' to all the contributors who took time to provide material for us for this issue. Paddle safe and enjoy the sea. [Sue](#)



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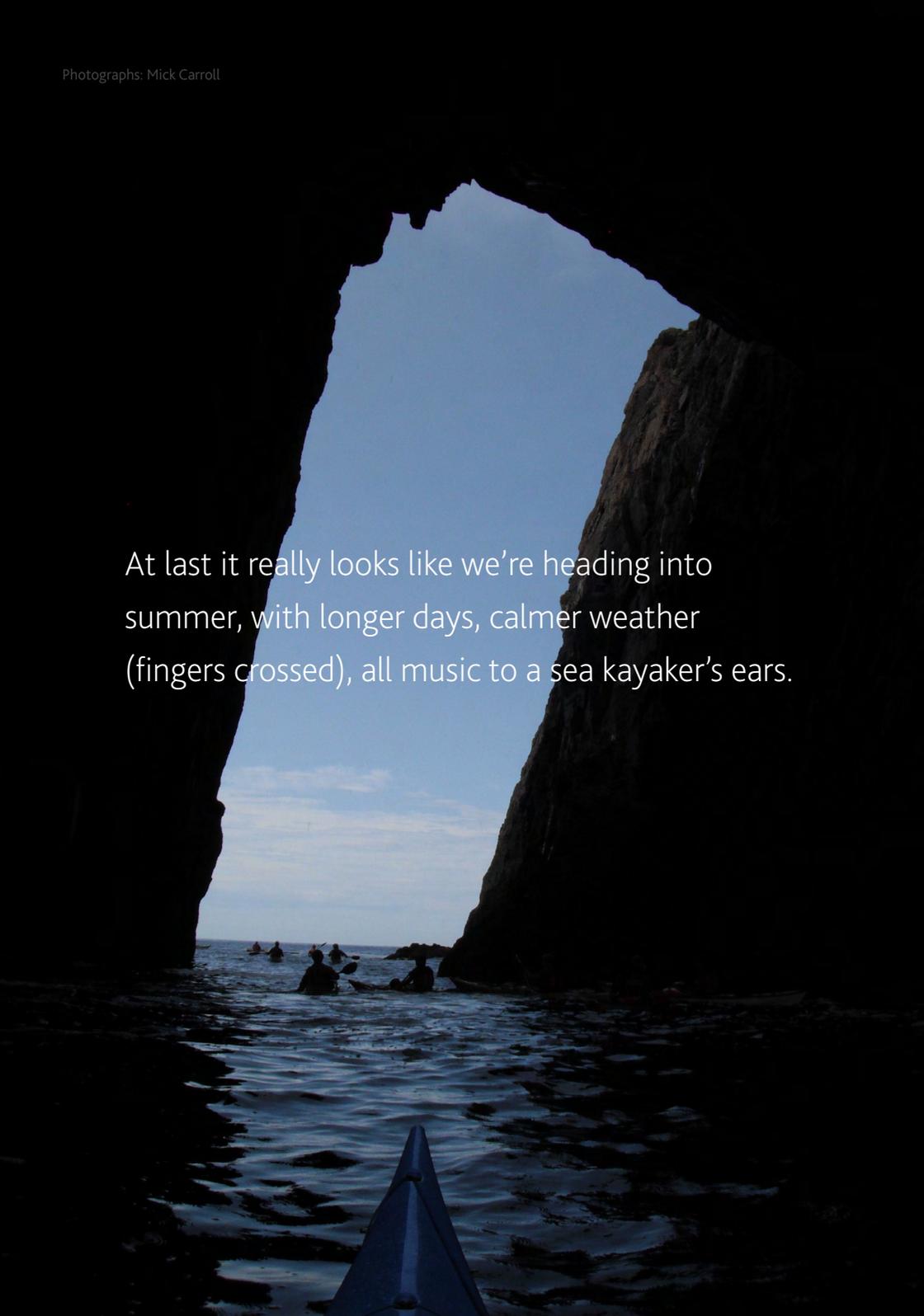
*Sue Honan*

*Cover photo of Julian Haines returning  
from the Kish taken by Roger Waugh.*



Photographs: Mick Carroll

At last it really looks like we're heading into summer, with longer days, calmer weather (fingers crossed), all music to a sea kayaker's ears.



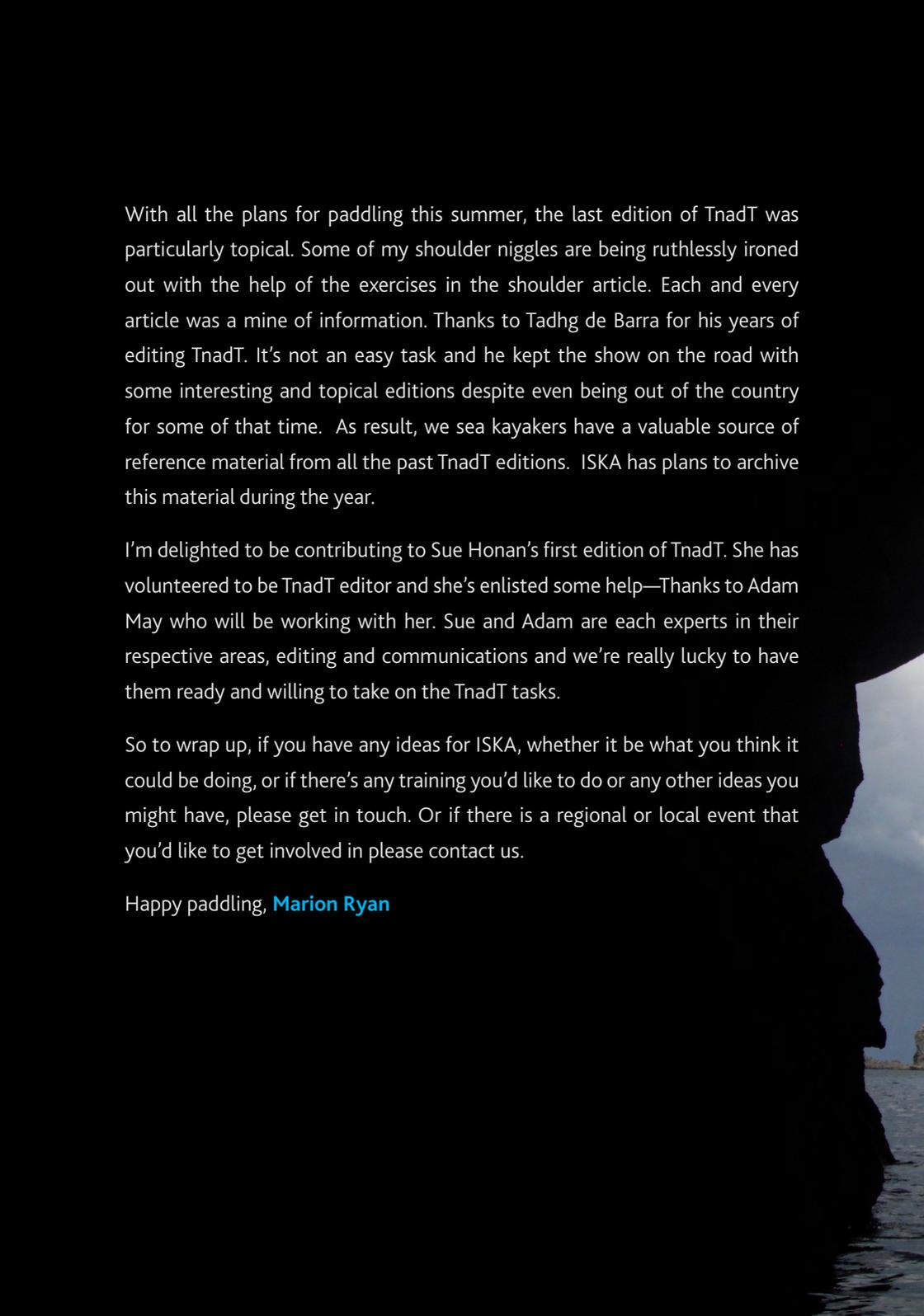
Dear Member—Dates have been set for ISKA meets and the first meet was in the South East in late April. What a beautiful trip it was on the Saturday. The Streamstown meet went ahead on the 16-18th May where we were sad to say Thank You and goodbye to Martin Guilfoyle and we all wish him luck in his new ventures.

A successful meet at Kilbaha, Co. Clare has just taken place. Meets have been organised right up to the symposium which will be held in Baltimore in October. In addition to the main meets, we're hoping to run some mini meets so please keep an eye on the ISKA website where all details will be posted.

We've organised some incident training in Connemara, Achill and Cork. This year we are prioritising trip leaders, meets organisers and volunteers. We hope to roll this out to a wider group of members next year and keep this type of training rolling on an annual basis across the membership.

I hope that this summer we'll get to explore and paddle some interesting and exciting spots around Ireland. Please update us with your exploits. Remember some members will be living vicariously through you! There's a trip review thread on the bulletin board and it's really easy to post up there. This helps build a good source of information for members. Also, you might consider writing up a short review for TnadT. We all love reading about kayak trips. Trips that involve planning and whether the plan went out the window or not, or trips with any problems or unexpected events that cropped up.

So work is going on behind the scenes for our symposium in October. Baltimore has a lot to offer. Spectacular scenery, dozens of islands, Fastnet, sheltered bays and for non-paddling partners we hope to organise hillwalking trips and more. So please start putting a bit away, and get ready to spend a weekend in West Cork exploring and catching up with other paddlers from all over Ireland.



With all the plans for paddling this summer, the last edition of TnadT was particularly topical. Some of my shoulder niggles are being ruthlessly ironed out with the help of the exercises in the shoulder article. Each and every article was a mine of information. Thanks to Tadhg de Barra for his years of editing TnadT. It's not an easy task and he kept the show on the road with some interesting and topical editions despite even being out of the country for some of that time. As result, we sea kayakers have a valuable source of reference material from all the past TnadT editions. ISKA has plans to archive this material during the year.

I'm delighted to be contributing to Sue Honan's first edition of TnadT. She has volunteered to be TnadT editor and she's enlisted some help—Thanks to Adam May who will be working with her. Sue and Adam are each experts in their respective areas, editing and communications and we're really lucky to have them ready and willing to take on the TnadT tasks.

So to wrap up, if you have any ideas for ISKA, whether it be what you think it could be doing, or if there's any training you'd like to do or any other ideas you might have, please get in touch. Or if there is a regional or local event that you'd like to get involved in please contact us.

Happy paddling, **Marion Ryan**



# Oileáin

Review

The Irish Islands Guide, 2nd Edition, David Walsh

by Lonan Byrne Aghillaun, Sandy Island, The Catalogues, Hare, Skeam East, Skeam West, Calf Island East, Calf Island Middle, Calf Island West... the list of islands in the new edition of Oileáin rolls on, page after page, a litany, each island a chant, a prayer bead thumbed with the cadence of a paddle stroke, which sends the inquisitive kayaker ever further on his way round Ireland... Carthys, Mannin Beg, Mannin, Illaunrahnee, Ardillaun, Horse, Castle, Long Island, Coney, Goat... om mane padme om...

The kayaking sorority in Ireland has hungrily awaited Oileáin, by David Walsh, just recently published in its second edition, since the 1st edition sold out some years ago. While the on-line text version can fill the raw information gap for a specific destination, there is no substitute for thumbing through 'the buke'.

Speaking recently with David, he commented on what he considers distinctive about Oileáin—that unlike pilots etc. which lead through and round islands as places to avoid, Oileáin runs 'the other way', telling how to get to islands and from one to the other—the island is the thing. A point made in the Introduction is that Oileáin is for all who disport themselves inshore—yachties, SOTs, SUPs, PADIs. All references to kayaking and kayakers are inclusive.

The 2nd edition brings many changes, and for the better. With over 570 islands documented, nearly double the original island count, it is now a complete catalogue of the Irish coastline. The concerns for nature, wildlife, environment, ecology, history and pre-history, notable in the 1st edition, remain in the new

edition. Intimately connected to the littoral seascape, Oileáin is unique in using OS maps for directions, indicative of the close relationship between kayaking, cycling, hill-walking and rock-climbing—parallel passions of the author and many kayakers also.

With the focus always on getting there and back, the new edition establishes a consistent style for the display of key navigational information, with grid references under the title of each island and through the text, and tidal information in a new more readable format. While Oileáin a hAon quickly established itself as the prime reference for trip planning in Ireland, Oileáin a Dó is even easier to use, and its place at the breakfast table for planning the day is assured.

Oileáin is the product of a unique production process, starting life as a set of brief notes for fellow boaters. It gave voice to a new language—Walsh-speak—a compact argot (characteristic of David, as all who know him will testify) which compresses maximum information into the shortest space, while expanding pithily on nature, rocks, locale, history, life itself, in an entertaining and at times hilarious style. It quickly found a home on the web where other kayakers were encouraged to contribute. The published editions have drawn on a worthy back-room team, mainly Des Keaney, whose delicate job is to polish Walsh-speak for a general readership without losing its character, and Sean Pierce, picture editor. The latest edition is the result of a commitment over many years to a unique journey, itself made up many journeys—fiche bliain ag fás.

How does the 2nd edition compare with first? The constraint of including almost double the number of islands in a heft-able volume has had effects. Walsh-speak has necessarily been diluted, particularly in the newer entries, and the number and size of photos and maps has been compressed. The photos in the 1st volume inspired a fledgling generation of kayakers (this one

included) to go and see the outdoor originals. It is testament to the growth of kayaking in Ireland, helped no doubt by Oileáin, that there is less need today to 'sell' the activity. Oileain.org must now have a large and unique collection of photos by kayakers of the Irish coastline—a suggestion might be to catalogue and publish these to the web to supplement the book?

Inishtrahull and the Tor Rocks north of it are the final entries in Oileáin a Dó. A recent trip to Inishowen that included a landing on Inishtrahull (C482 652) allows comparison of the new and the old. The new text is noticeably spare and focused on the navigation e.g. gone are the historical notes on Inch Island and the driving directions to get there (satnav wins). The unique geology and the island fauna of Inishtrahull itself are extracted from the original text into easy-to-read side panels. The real improvement is seen in the navigation directions. The directions in the original Oileáin, with the old style tidal references, are cryptic as a crossword. All is clear in the new edition and, withal, a greater confidence of actually getting there and back.

Oileáin is borne of a deep relationship with that big island called Ireland, on an intimate scale. Its 570+ islands describe the Irish coastline completely—it is impossible to imagine a similar book covering the length of the British coastline, for instance. We are deeply fortunate to have this record, which gives us our own seascape and opens up the hidden recesses and treasures of our own place.

Táimid buíoch agus bródúil asat, a Dhaití, tá an-ghaisce déanta agat i gcuidiú mairnéalaí báid bheaga in ngach gcríoch in Éirinn. Tá d'obair déanta—lig do scíth fad tamaill.

Inishoo, Inishgowla, Inishlaughil, Inishbollog, Inishdaff, Inishmolt, Illanmaw, Inishfesh, Inishcuill, Freaghillaun East, Freaghillaun West, Inishkee... sé do bheatha...

**Oileáin** ISBN 978-1-906095-37-6 **Pesda Press** 9781906095376



# Inishowen Seakayak Symposium 2014



We welcome Dave Conroy with his first article (but, I am sure, not his last..) for TnadT.

My 25-year school re-union was to take place on the 25th April 2014, so needless to say, once I heard the same date announced for this year's Inishowen Sea Kayaking Symposium, I had my genuine excuse, booked my place and packed my bags! I had hoped to be in possession of a new craft for the occasion, but sadly this was delayed. Instead, I rented the new Wilderness Focus from iCanoe, before setting off for Moville on the Friday morning.

Arriving in Donegal later that day, I was greeted by the man behind it all, Adrian Harkin, who delighted in telling me numbers had doubled on last years attendance, obviously the word got out—this is a great kayaking destination. Adrian's local knowledge helped me decide what classes to join. Catch it & Cook it, Navigation, Tide races, Caves, Islands, and Techniques etc. etc. In the end, my choice of kayak determined what I did. A few 'cups o'tay' later, I went to check out my digs for the weekend, fully kitted out holiday apartments. Very comfortable accommodation, a great choice of classes and transport to and from all of them, as well as 2 nights B&B, 2 packed lunches and an evening



meal, all for €140pp. This certainly put it up to any LivingSocial deal I have seen recently...

I joined my fellow paddlers- Michael Carroll, Sennan O'Boyle, Lonan Byrne and Tom Ronayne who had just returned from their personal paddle trip and spent the entirety of dinner tickling our taste buds for the weekend to come. Afterwards we hopped over to St Eugene's Hall, to see the official presentations. Over the course of the weekend we heard from experienced and renowned paddlers, Des Keane, Robert Livingston, Mike McClure, Dave Walsh, and Jim Kennedy as they regaled us with slideshows and talks of their trips from around the world, Vancouver Island, Cape Horn, Corsica and more...

On Saturday morning, we got organised for our trips for the day, kayaks on trailers and bodies on buses. We were transported to each of the different venues, with three groups (Tide Races, Navigation & Techniques) heading to a wee fishing village off Glengad Head. I joined some friends from Mid Ulster Canoe & Kayak Club and Sperrin Paddlers to do the Navigation class, hosted by Mike McClure. He was very helpful, making it easy to point us in the right direction and as the class hugged the coastline navigating their way to Malin Head—'keep Ireland on your left' seemed to be the consensus.

*Mike McClure with a group session  
on navigation*

I didn't feel 100% comfy in my rental boat, so I opted to stay behind in the shelter of the harbour and joined some paddlers from Belfast & Silver Bridge Kayak Clubs, for some instruction from Jim Kennedy. Like a golfer would have their swing analysed, Jim observed and recorded our 'individual technique' and gave some guidance on each of our key issues to concentrate on. My paddle style is a work in progress, 8 years progression so far...



*Jim Kennedy models the new  
Stealth Kayak*

Inishowen has many features for the sea kayaker to tick off, obviously Malin Head and potentially Inishtrahull, Ireland's most northerly island. Just around the corner from Ireland's most northerly point, lies Ireland's most northerly bar and participants from several of the different classes gathered there to recuperate post afternoon exertion. We eventually made our way back to



Moville and rinsed off, in preparation for another quiet evening in town.



Sunday morning came and after a hearty breakfast, we gathered at the car park, just up from Inishowen Adventures. Great news; conditions were ripe for Inishtrahull and the majority of paddlers opted to make the challenging crossing. Once again, I felt that my boat was inappropriate for me to spend a long day in and so I opted to join the Greenland Rollers and others as we explored the rugged coastline around Lenan Head.



My fellow East Coaster, Chris Hamilton, went with John Harkin and Graham Smith's group to a scenic location, near the caves, for a spot of kayak angling. Everybody in the group caught more than one fish—a big improvement on last year, when the group returned empty handed to Brian MacDermott's (The No Salt Chef, RTE) Outdoor Cookery Demonstration back at the centre. Chris caught four fish, which looked to him like large Pollock but he learned that they were in fact Coalies, or at least that's what they call them in Donegal. Either way, Chef managed to make a wonderful seafood dish with some the catch, which we all delighted in sharing at the end of the day. Some attendees got to try their hand at filleting a fish too.



Inishtrahull, island of the hollow beach, is the most northerly island of Ireland, home to Irelands northernmost lighthouse. Some of our more intrepid paddlers have now completed their trips to the furthest of Ireland's extremities. I believe Michael Carroll has a tale or two to tell of their voyage across to Inishtrahull and will leave him to present that tale.

I hope to return next year and in a boat a tad more accommodating. Even though I didn't get to do what I had planned, there was still plenty of other options to choose from. The Inishowen Peninsula is a great sea kayaking destination, so much to see and still a lot to tick off and you can go anytime, you don't have to wait until then. Give Inish Adventures a shout and they'll put you on the right track!

P.S. Some of you may be wondering why my boat wasn't suitable for some of the trips. Well it was a lovely boat, low mileage and very handy to be able to rent-demo it over the weekend. Unfortunately, it wasn't for me. I have a physical attribute which prevents me from fitting into most normal kayaks (cars, beds, aircraft seats, clothes, cubicles! etc.) I'm six feet and eleven inches in height (212cm), but as I say that's another story, for another issue... [Dave Conroy](#)



# Incredible Inishowen

*Michael Carroll*

East Coast Sea Kayak Club members, Tom Ronayne, Mick Carroll, Sennan O'Boyle and Lonan Byrne headed up to Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula at the end of April. Mick gives an account of one of their trips with the Inishowen symposium group.



## Inishtrahull

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The plan was to head to Inishtrahull, one of the big islands to check off your list of things to achieve. We took our cars to the launch point at Malin Pier. It seems all the best paddles start or end here in Inishowen. The wind was a bit stronger on the land than we expected blowing a F3\4 from the E, though the sun was shining and it was warm. The leaders Mike McClure and Des Keaney had done their homework very well with excellent planning and chart work by Mike. The plan for the main group was to head east to Stookaruddan in the lee of the mainland using the eddy and then strike for the SE end of Inishtrahull some nine kilometres away.

The three of us had arranged to head on a slightly different more easterly course. We all paddled at a steady comfortable pace to within 5 kilometres of the island where we saw a black buoy showing the tide was pumping SW against us. We began to bear up more to the east to counter this and the main group continued towards the SE of Inishtrahull.

## Third Gear required...

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We were briefed that the last two kilometres were the crux point for this paddle with a four-knot current against us. The plan was to keep high on the island to the SE end and to ferry glide across the four-knot current and come in around the SW end of the island. We had been warned that paddlers need to be able to find second gear at this point and eventually a third gear to get through the race. Suddenly it was second gear time and the lighthouse was soon opposite us as we were rapidly swept westward. It was now time to find that third gear. Initially I heard the lads behind me answering the calls and eventually the answers died off. A look over my shoulder showed no sign of

them. With just one km to go I guessed they were not going to make it so resolved to reach the island and just touch it and rejoin the group. Head down and battle the 4-knot current. I could see I was making absolutely no progress and no matter what effort I put in the island appeared to be no nearer. I was going flat out. I crossed the overfall off the SW end of the Island and felt I was going to be washed away to the west out of reach of the island. Again a final burst of effort and suddenly I realised I was ferry gliding into the lee of the lighthouse on the western end and would get an eddy here. Pulling hard I closed on the island and caught sight of Will Brown swinging into the lee of the lighthouse just in front of me. I joined Will, spent at this time by the effort and looked about for the main body. Then I spot Sennan crawling up from the west of where I came from. He said his GPS showed he was making 1kph for a time trying to close on the island. Then way to the west, we spot the rest of the group slowly closing on the island. I went out to encourage them in and it was a great feeling to have landed the whole group on Inishtrahull.

## Whirlpool!

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After a quick lunch, the three of us decided to circumnavigate the island with a warning from Mike McClure that only those with good rough water ability should try this. Nobody else elected to join us so we all launched together and we three headed east about the NE of the island. Luckily, we had read Oileáin that advised us there is a cut between Gull Island and the main island, which if conditions allow should be used to avoid the whirlpool. Whirlpool I thought, how bad could that be? However, I took the advice and entered the gap, which had the ebb tide pumping through it and was a battle to reach the end of the three hundred metre channel. At the south end the entrance was awash with a boiling overfall that was pumping eastward across the exit at about four knots.

This is against the main flow which was still ebbing westward at four knots.

I ploughed out into the streaming flood at 90 degrees as the water was crashing on the rocks guarding the entrance to the channel. Immediately on exiting the channel, I found myself, not unexpectedly, swept away to the east and turned to look to see where the current was taking me. I now got my first view of the whirlpool no more than thirty metres from me which appeared to be a maelstrom of heaving white water lying about twenty feet offshore and about twenty feet wide at its centre with impossibly boiling water appearing to throw ten foot waves vertically in irregular constant motion from every direction. I turned and paddled for dear life at a ferry angle to get out of the current that was shooting me straight to the whirlpool. I felt I had left it too late and would be drawn into it; I took another look at what I would face. This was enough to spur me to even greater efforts to avoid this fate. I eventually pulled out of the main stream to rejoin the other two. They had seen me being swept away to the east and took a much sharper angle on exiting the channel. They did not see the whirlpool as they were focused on the waves crashing against the rocks guarding the entrance. I thought of Mike McClure's warning about rough water skills and wished he had been a bit more specific on just what skill level was required. It is great to have survived the experience.

We paddled on at 14kph back towards Malin Pier with the ebb tide still behind us taking the not recommended in Oileáin western route inside the Garvan Isles as it was now reaching slack and it was possible. Still we were swept way west of the pier by what we later established was a powerful eddy west of the Garvans. We landed feeling elated at having reached Inishtrahull and survived the circumnavigation. It did feel like a lot longer paddle than 18 km. No sign of the others when we landed and twenty minutes later they came in from the west having been caught in the same eddy but swept further west than us. We



had in fact overtaken them on the inside of the Garvans without seeing them as we were looking for them to the east of the Garvans. We finished the day with the standard treat for ECSKC members—99s in the sunshine.

### Inishowen Licked!

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The whole Inishowen experience was fantastic with probably the best sea kayaking I have ever had. The weather of course made a huge difference with Mediterranean—like conditions while we were there. The Sandrock Hostel is a gem of a place and at twelve euro a night, a steal.

Many thanks to Adrian Harkin and his crew for organising the Inishowen Sea Kayaking Symposium, it was well organised from start to finish with some excellent leaders who you could trust with your life.

Without the Symposium, we would still be in ignorance of (in my view) the best sea kayaking venue in Ireland. Inishowen is not too far away when you take the motorway to Derry as we did via Monaghan and Omagh. It is well worth the effort. Try to pick a period of good weather if you can to experience all it has to offer.

A person wearing a dark blue jacket and a black beanie is working in a workshop. They are leaning over a wooden frame structure. The workshop is filled with various tools, wood, and equipment. The floor is covered with wood shavings. The background shows a window and more workshop equipment.

Paddles,  
cake, a goat  
and other  
mid-winter  
miscellany

As I stand in the workshop on a wet Sunday afternoon in mid January and gaze with great pride upon my perfectly formed, lovingly shaped and infinitely beautiful (at least to my eye) Greenland paddle, I cast my mind back to Friday evening and the start of our ISKA Greenland paddle-making weekend. **Tony Walsh**



*Martin Guilfoyle summons the rolling gods.*

We stand examining the planks of red cedar that have been sourced—from a man in Cork I thought I heard someone say—ready to choose, for better or for worse, our companion piece of wood for the next two days. There are seven of us new to the game, a veteran returning to make a set of Greenland splits, the

organizers and our master craftsmen and, perhaps the most important person of all, our host and hostess, Josie and Maire Ó Gobúin, upon whom our vittles for the weekend depend. Peter Hennesen has laid out a selection of his own Greenland paddles for us to examine and help us visualize how ours planks will transform over the next 48 hours. There is a considerable degree of scepticism among us that we will attain anything akin to the shape, let alone standard, of Peter's paddles.

We nod uncertainly, kick the proverbial tyres, discuss ring spacing and wood grain while Josie, our host and premier master craftsman shows us the grain on various planks in his workshop and tells us the reasons and meanings contained therein. For me, someone who has over the past twenty years called many different bed sits, apartments and houses home, the planks cut from a trees he planted and from a tree his father planted strike me as displaying great constancy.

After much humming and hawing, we select our planks and in some respects, we might as well have closed our eyes and indulged in a bit of 'eeny meeny mo'. This was brought home when the last man (who also happened to be one of our master craftsmen) arrived, chose a plank and was heard proclaiming that his was as fine a piece of timber that a paddle-maker could hope for.

Connemara, as most of you will know, is not for softies. The rains fall hard and cold in January and the wind will cut you in two. Therefore, I feel it my duty to advise you that the ISKA paddle-making weekend, organized by Dave Glasgow, Peter Hennesen and Martin Guilfoyle and hosted by Josie and Moira Ó Gobúin should only be undertaken by those who like cake, soft mattresses, delicious homemade food, good wine and great company. However, they do work you long and hard.

We were called away from our beers on the Friday evening to select our plank

and get cracking on measuring and marking out our dimensions in preparation for the band saw. After that, we had just enough time for a glass and a chat before hitting the sack. Dave's instructions to bring sleeping mats, bags and plenty of warm clothes had us prepared for rough quarters. So much so that one among us assumed that, the bare loft in the workshop was where we were destined to spend the night. Instead, we lodged in a lovely house a few steps from the workshop. Upon entering our accommodation, the warm fragrant smell of burning turf welcomed us into a living area that was perfectly suited to cake eating, wine drinking and goat toasting.

Saturday morning dawned and we were asleep. The sun crept up, time passed and on we slept. When I said they worked you hard, I was being somewhat harsh. We finally rose, ate and hit the workshop. Josie manned the band saw continuously for a couple of hours, by the end of which time we had our planks cut down and ready for shaping. We re-drew our centre lines as required and marked out our paddles ready to go. Well almost ready to go after several attempts to re-establish his centre point, one of our number, and I'll refrain from naming names, noticed that something was amiss. Amiss by a number of inches not just a few mill (note that we were sufficiently expert by the end of the weekend to bandy inches and millimetres about as if they were old friends). Under normal circumstances, this would have been the end of paddle-making and the start of the drumstick-making, particularly as there were no spare planks knocking about. However, owing to Josie's considerable skill the paddle was rescued and returned for shaping.

We worked through the afternoon with planes, spoke-shaves, saws and, I say this through gritted teeth, chisels. It was with the chisel that I nearly did irreparable damage to the emerging paddle. One of the master craftsmen, Peter, takes the chisel and with what appears to be great ease, peels off clean

curling strips of red cedar. “Now Tony”, he says, handing me the chisel, “You do it.” No problem, tap, tap, tap, no beautiful strips of curling red cedar I note, tap tap, tap...gouge, agh, s\*\*\*t! I swear to forego the chisel for the remainder of the job and return to the spoke-shave. Martin comes by on his rounds to lend a hand and check on progress. “Ahh”, he comments, “the plane for the skilled worker and the spoke-shave for the semi-skilled.” I take the “semi” part as a compliment considering my performance with the chisel and keep the head down. We work on into the evening and towards eight o’ clock things begin to get a bit fraught. With tired minds and sore backs, errors occur and problems from early on in the process begin to become apparent. Wisely, we stop for the day, tidy up our work and head up to the house for dinner.

Sunday morning was make or break time for the paddles and the atmosphere became more concentrated...chit chat and niceties were put aside as we got down to the business end of the weekend. One took a slice out of his finger, another took too much off one side of his loom and I was in big trouble until the master stepped in and showed me how shaping the paddle was best accomplished. He effortlessly shaped one side of my paddle blade and in doing so, showed me how it was done and what the other three sides ought to look like. As the morning progressed, we all had paddles emerging. Karen was first out with a simply beautiful paddle that deserved our admiration (and a little envy on my part!). It was off to the sander for her. Peter manned the sander manfully for the next couple of hours as one by one our paddles completed their transformation from plank to paddle. Frowns turned to smiles and by lunchtime we were wandering around beaming from ear to ear, admiring each other’s creations and watching with delight as the teak oil brought out the warmth and depth of the wood.

After lunch, we applied the finishing touches and then assembled outside the

workshop for the mysterious (and a little frightening) ceremony of the rolling guarantee. With solemn words and to the sound of the spirit of the wood, our paddles were imbued with the 'rolling guarantee'. Of course, what better activity to engage in, to test the guarantee than to head out for a trial run and a spot of rolling. The guarantee held, the paddles sliced across the water and the rollers came up every time.

It is easy to buy Greenland Paddles, there are many websites offering bespoke sticks for a range of prices. This weekend was different. It was the result of many people informally offering their time and skills for the benefit of others—typical ISKA characteristics. Without Josie and Maire's hospitality and generosity with their house, Peter offering his time and skills Dave Glasgow organising and providing sumptuous goat to eat, and Martin sourcing the wood and generally getting people together, none of the paddlers would be the proud owners a priceless Greenland Paddle they made for themselves.

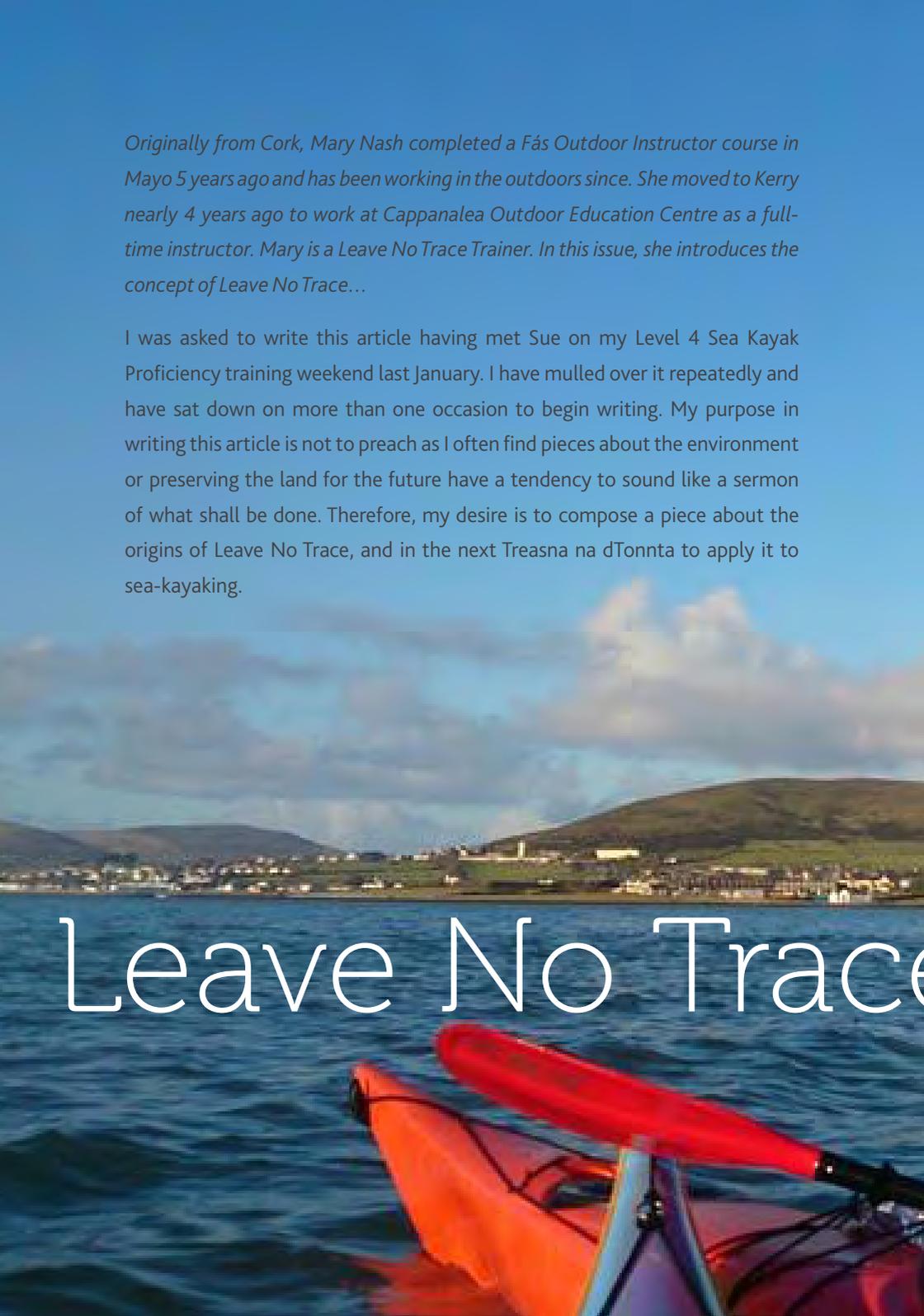
A special word of thanks has to be extended to Maire Ó Gobúin who cooked the most wonderful food for hungry paddle shapers and who worked harder than anyone, behind the scenes. So, if you can spare the time, the organisers are good enough to run it again and the kindest of hosts generously open up their home again...do yourself a favour in the darkest of months and go make a paddle!

Paddle Shapers: Billy (from Bunratty), Sean Cahill (Clare), John (lemon cake) Dempsey (East Coast Seakayak Club), Margaret Farrell (ECSKC), Ewan Lenoach (ECSKC), Dan Mc Cormack (Dublin Bay Sea kayaks), Alan O'Reilly (ECSKC), Tony Walsh (ECSKC), Karen Webster (Sligo).

Paddle Meisters: Josie Ó Gobúin, Peter Hennesen, Martin Guilfoyle and Dave Glasgow.

*Originally from Cork, Mary Nash completed a Fás Outdoor Instructor course in Mayo 5 years ago and has been working in the outdoors since. She moved to Kerry nearly 4 years ago to work at Capanalea Outdoor Education Centre as a full-time instructor. Mary is a Leave No Trace Trainer. In this issue, she introduces the concept of Leave No Trace...*

I was asked to write this article having met Sue on my Level 4 Sea Kayak Proficiency training weekend last January. I have mulled over it repeatedly and have sat down on more than one occasion to begin writing. My purpose in writing this article is not to preach as I often find pieces about the environment or preserving the land for the future have a tendency to sound like a sermon of what shall be done. Therefore, my desire is to compose a piece about the origins of Leave No Trace, and in the next Treasna na dTonnta to apply it to sea-kayaking.

A scenic view of a coastal town with a red kayak in the foreground. The town is nestled at the foot of a hill, with buildings and a church spire visible. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a clear, bright blue with some light clouds. The red kayak is in the foreground, with its paddle resting on the deck. The text "Leave No Trace" is overlaid in white on the water.

# Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is not a law; when you are out in the wilderness there is most likely nobody there watching what you do. So why should we leave no trace?



From my own personal background, it came as an afterthought. I work in an outdoor education centre. My love of the outdoors and being in the wild is a part of my everyday living, and I love to see people brought into this world and exposed to places they have never experienced before. Leave No Trace makes perfect sense to me. Why would I even think of leaving a mess after me in a place that I arrived in and wondered at its beauty?

Man has inhabited this planet for thousands of years, and yet it is only in the last 100 years that we have explored the two poles, and climbed the highest mountains. It is no longer unusual to hear of such explorations. We have reached a population of over 7 billion people on this planet, an increase of more than 5 billion over the last century. Where once wilderness was everywhere, humanity has encroached on it with our everyday living, therefore if we are to preserve the remaining wild places for as long as we can then it is up to our actions today. For those of you who have been sea kayaking for many years, you have probably witnessed first hand the steady increase of people on the water.

Leave No Trace, the organisation, began in the United States of America in the early 1990's as public land use increased and the physical effects were becoming obvious. For many years in the south of Ireland, various organisations followed different types of country code, but no national code existed. A meeting

of a selection of governing bodies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Services, Coillte, Mountaineering Ireland, Scouting Ireland, to mention just a few, occurred in 2004 to address these issues. The meeting decided that Leave No Trace was the best suited to Ireland's purposes. One of the main reasons for this is that Leave No Trace is educational, designed to teach us skills and increase awareness in order to assist us in the preservation of our wilderness for the future. If we can spread the message to outdoor users, it is hoped that we can encourage a change in our actions. Outside of the U.S.A., Leave No Trace has set up international organisations in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Ireland. Ireland is at the forefront of Leave No Trace in Europe.

Leave No Trace operates on 7 Main Principles:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Be Considerate of Others
- Respect Wildlife and Animals
- Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
- Leave What You Find
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Minimise the Effects of Fire

These principles are both a guideline to follow and umbrella titles upon which to act. Does that imply there is nothing outside the guidelines that needs attention? I certainly hope not. As I mentioned earlier, these are not laws that are enforced. My hope is that being aware of them might make you think. Moreover, if all it does is make you think then I believe they are successful.

In the next article, I will delve further into the principles and apply them more specifically to sea kayaking. If you wish to further your knowledge of Leave No Trace you can attend an Awareness Session which is a workshop on the Seven Principles. Details of workshops are available at [www.leavenotraceireland.org](http://www.leavenotraceireland.org)

# THE BRITISH ISLES

## JULY 2100

<b>YORKSHIRE</b>	Major Region
<i>English Channel</i>	Channel/Gulf
<i>IRISH SEA</i>	Sea/Ocean
● Scarborough	>50,000 City
● Gloucester	>1,000,000 City
■ Kingston	>5,000,000 City
■ GLASGOW	Capital City
■ Galway	Minor Sunken City
■ Liverpool	Major Sunken City

Scale 1:2400000\*  
 Drawn by The9988

\*1 centimeter on map equals 24 kilometers in real life



Fig. 1. Fictional sea level rise by year 2100 as predicted by artist Jason Simons a graphic artist from Slovakia who specialises in detailed maps of the world. He writes, "After global warming and rising of sea level sharply escalated, sea level is now 100 meters higher than it was in year 2000."

Source: <http://www.her.ie/life/pic-of-the-day-ireland-in-2100-will-your-town-or-village-survive/>



## Tidelines

*In this issue, Alan Horner returns with a timely piece about global warming and coastal erosion.*

# Ireland 2100

The future for Sea Kayaking in Ireland and the UK looks very bright if this (hopefully fictional) map is to be believed.

So although most of us reading this article in 2014 will long have paddled our kayak into the sunset by that stage, our Sea Kayaking grandchildren could be enjoying an island archipelago landscape. The old coastal cities of Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Galway and Limerick will be fantastic attractions for Scuba Divers and who knows, perhaps in 2100 Bord Fáilte will be marketing submarine tours of our cities on a hop-on, hop-off basis.

## Global Warming

---

Global Warming has already started and is impacting human civilisation and natural habitats. For some years now climate scientists have been predicting:

- Increased frequency and intensity of Atlantic storms—Linked to the Jet Stream and a negative North Atlantic Oscillation
- Warming temperatures in the Arctic and Antarctic leading to the disappearance of Arctic Sea Ice by 2016
- Melting of the Arctic permafrost releasing huge quantities of Methane gas
- Acceleration of sea level rise. Currently Global Sea Levels are rising at 3mm per year. This will cause increased incidence of coastal erosion in Ireland and elsewhere

What is frightening is that these individual weather events are connected—caused by climatic changes.

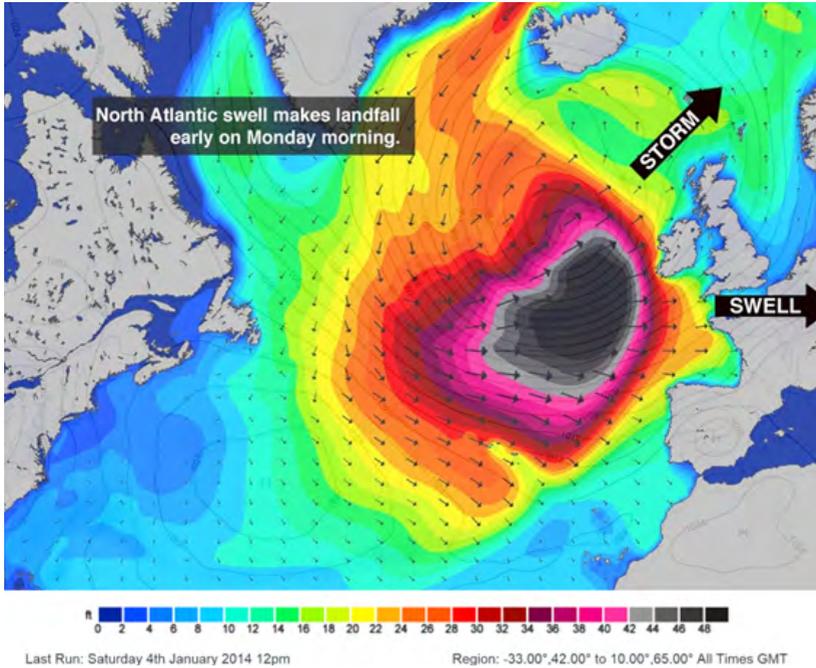


Fig.2. Atlantic swell heights of up to 50 metres as predicted on magic seaweed Jan 4TH 2014.

### Atlantic Winter Storms –linked to global warming

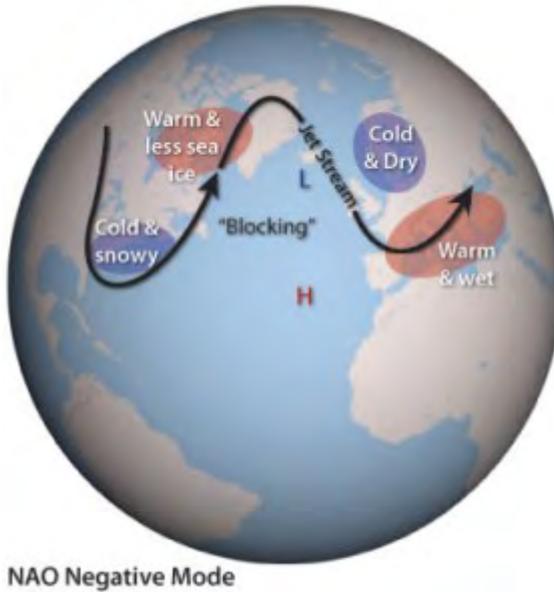
The winter just gone of 2013/2014 brought us constant storms, widespread storm surges and coastal flooding which scientists predict will become a more frequent occurrence in the future. The Atlantic Storms are fuelled by the high altitude winds of the Jet Stream, which is itself fuelled by air pressure. Air pressure systems in the North Atlantic—called the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) can be positive or negative. In negative mode, both the Icelandic Low pressure area and the Azores High pressure area are weaker than usual.

### What is the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO)?

The North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) is a periodic variation in the strengths and positions of the Icelandic Low and the Azores High. The Icelandic Low is a semi-permanent low-pressure area sitting close to Iceland, while the Azores (Bermuda) High is a semi-permanent high near the Azores. The Icelandic Low and Azores High fluctuate in strength and position over a period of months and years, and their variations can have an effect on weather in the eastern United States and Europe by shifting the location of the jet stream, which affects temperature and precipitation patterns over the south eastern United States and in Europe. *Source:* NCSU

You might also be aware of the severe winter experienced in the north eastern United States that even brought snow to the southern states of Florida, South Carolina and Georgia.

How are these weather events linked? In the winter of 2013/2014 the NAO was in negative mode. A weak Low Pressure in the Arctic over Greenland and weak High Pressure from the sub-tropics normally means that the Jet Stream tracks Mid-Atlantic. This brings stormy weather to Ireland's latitudes.



*Fig.3. NAO in negative mode: Both the Icelandic Low pressure area and the Azores High pressure area were weaker than usual. Source: (www.Climate.gov)*

Scientists investigating winters in the northern hemisphere from 2001-2013 and 1998—2000 say their findings leave little doubt that there is a link between the warming in the Arctic and as a consequence there is an impact on the jet-stream. This coupling between the Jet Stream and Arctic warming they call "Arctic Amplification" which is setting a trend or pattern over the last 6 years causing extreme weather events in the northern hemisphere over the last few years. The sources do stress that these links are not yet proven as the data is limited to a 12 year period where as normally these models are done on a 30 year cycle.

## Warming temperatures in the Arctic

The Arctic and Antarctic have felt the most dramatic rises in average annual temperatures by as much as 3 degrees Celsius. In the Arctic multi-year sea ice, some up to 10 years old has been lost due to warming and although ice re-forms each winter, single year ice is not as compacted and melts faster in spring and summer.

Ice in the polar regions reflects the sun's rays and solar radiation is deflected back into space. Open water however absorbs heat and as the ice melts, the warming is accelerated. In mid-September 2012 it was reported that the extent of sea ice had collapsed to just 3.5million km<sup>2</sup>, 40% of its usual extent measured in the 1970's. Scientists also expect the Arctic Ocean to be largely free of summer ice by 2020.



*Fig.4. Depiction of Arctic sea ice on Sept. 12, 2013 just before the estimated sea ice extent hit its annual minimum. The yellow line shows the 30-year average minimum extent. Image Credit: NASA Goddard's Scientific Visualization Studio/Cindy Starr*

## Melting permafrost and release of methane gas

NASA has tracked the extent of permafrost in an airborne mission called CARVE (Carbon in Arctic Reservoirs Vulnerability Experiment). They have confirmed that permafrost soils are warming even faster than Arctic air temperatures, by 1.5 to 2.5 degrees Celsius in just the past 30 years. Heat from the Earth's surface penetrates into the permafrost and is affecting the organic carbon reservoirs and releasing them into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide and methane. This is upsetting the Arctic's carbon balance and greatly intensifying global warming.



Fig.5. Permafrost zones occupy nearly a quarter of the exposed land area of the Northern Hemisphere.

Credit: Hugo Ahlenius, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

## Global Mean Sea Level Rise (GMSL)

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report of the 11th March 2014 tell us that it is very likely that GMSL rose at a mean rate of 1.7 mm/yr between 1900 and 2010 and at a rate of 3.2 mm/yr from 1993 to 2010. Ocean thermal expansion and melting of glaciers have been the largest contributors, accounting for over 80% of the GMSL rise over the latter period. Future rates of GMSL rise during the 21st century are projected to exceed the observed rate for the period 1971–2010.

So what does really mean for us? At the outset of this article the Fictional Sea Level rise was indicated at 100m—which is thankfully far in excess of the IPCC report. Their best-case calculation is a 5mm increase per year in Global Mean Sea Level rise. Indicating that by the year 2100, an average rise of 48 cm in the 86 years could be expected for which they have medium confidence. IPCC do point out that many regional factors will affect the actual sea level rise felt. They do warn that some scientists contest this and that upper estimates of up to 2.4 metre GMSL are projected but they say there is low agreement on this higher estimate but also no scientific consensus of the upper limit for the 21st century either.

Even the lower estimated GMSL will give flooding problems to coastal cities. In Ireland, Galway, Cork and Dublin experienced some levels of flooding over this last winter. Dublin didn't have the wild Atlantic pushing huge storm waves up against the coast—in fact it was a calm quiet day in January when the sea level just kept on rising until it burst over quay walls and coastal embankments. This was due to a combination of spring tides and storm surge—which pushed the normal spring tide levels well above the normal limits.

So adding a gradual rise in the average sea levels to the combined effects of

local weather and lunar cycles it will mean that we can expect more frequent flood events to occur in the future.

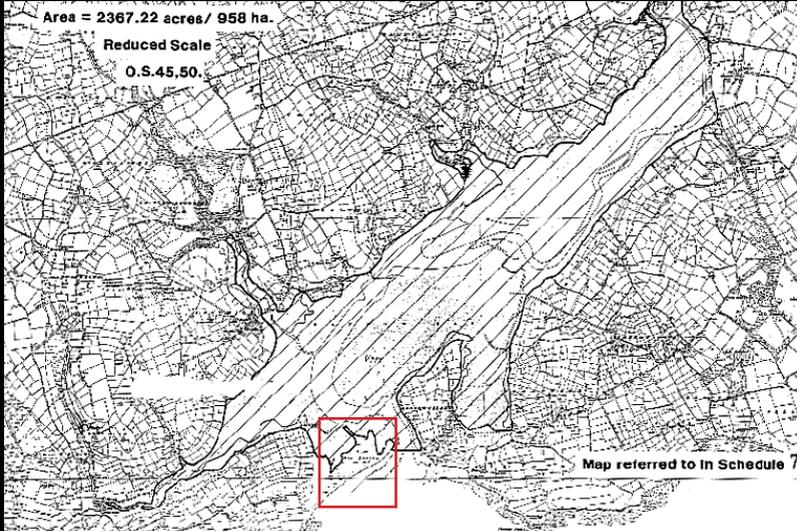
### Erosion Of Coastal And Low Lying Areas

The 2014 IPCC report tells us that... 'Coastal systems and low-lying areas will increasingly experience adverse impacts such as submergence, coastal flooding and coastal erosion due to relative sea level rise. Beaches, sand dunes and cliffs currently eroding will continue to do so under increasing sea level. Large spatial variations in the projected sea level rise together with local factors means relative sea level rise at the local scale can vary considerably from projected Global Mean Sea Level (GMSL) rise. The storms related impacts and associated storm surges will be worsened by GMSL rise although uncertainty related to changes in tropical and mid-latitude cyclones at the regional scale will signify that there is low confidence in projections of storm surge change. Both relative sea level rise and impacts are also influenced by a variety of local processes unrelated to climate (e.g. subsidence, glacial isostatic adjustment, sediment transport and coastal development.'

For Ireland, this means further impact of coastal erosion especially in sensitive areas of the coastline.



Fig.6. Winter storms cause serious erosion at Ardamine beach, Courstown Co. Wexford. (Pic: Alan Vines) (RTE 2014)



Source : <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1994/en/si/0349.html>

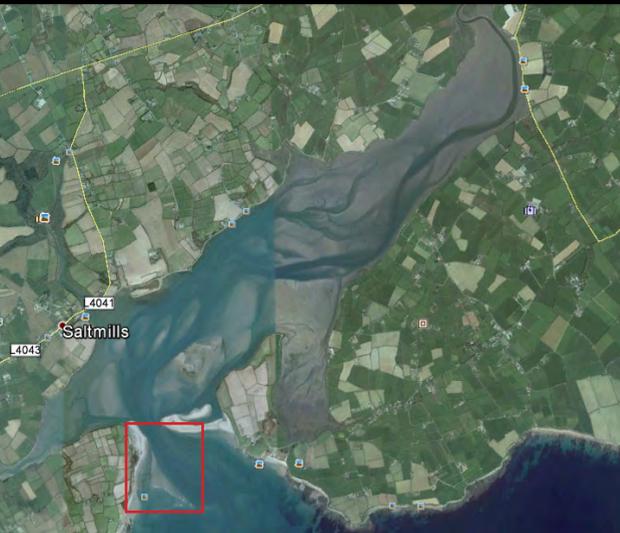
Source: Google Maps

In fact Co. Wexford whose coastal landscape has a predominance of sand dunes and mud flats has been recognised for many years as an area under threat with some parts losing up to 3 metres per year to the sea.

Bannow Bay (near Hook Head) has experienced quite dramatic changes as shown by the the two maps in Fig.6 from 1994 and from Google maps within last few years. I know from personal experience the missing area highlighted in the red squares was a wild area of machair and sand dunes now completely obliterated.

### For Sea Kayakers

Aside from the disruption of our winter kayaking activities—we should be aware that after this winters severe storms many of our familiar landing, launching and wild camping places could have changed.



*Fig.6. The maximum erosion rate identified east of Cork Harbour occurred at the entrance to Bannow Bay (Big Burrow) in County Wexford and equated to an annualised erosion rate of 9.4 metres. (This is not considered representative of the coastline as a whole). West of Cork Harbour, the maximum annual rate of erosion observed was 0.9 metres per year while the mean rate was 0.25 metres per year.*

Source : [http://www.opw.ie/media/ICPSS\\_TechnicalReport\\_Final\\_South.pdf](http://www.opw.ie/media/ICPSS_TechnicalReport_Final_South.pdf)

Former Machair beaches may be badly eroded, gently sloping beaches may have changed profile. Jagged rocks replace soft sand after the sand is scoured away by winter storms. Also, be wary of rocky cliff landscapes where winter storms may have dislodged rocks and boulders with dire consequences should a kayaker be in the receiving end. Always do your best to protect the fragility of the landscape and try to encourage others to treasure it also.

*Sources & Further reading:*

- IPCC
- Washington Post
- Live Science
- WWF
- Irish Times
- Wikipedia
- The Guardian
- Climate Adaptation
- Wikipedia
- NASA

Photograph: Mick Carroll





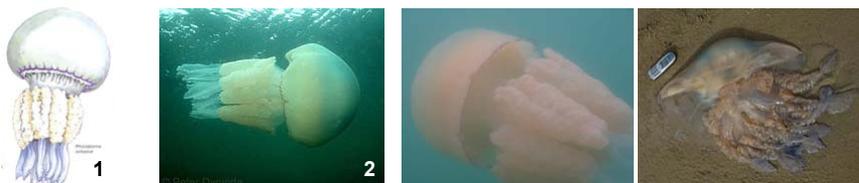
We would like to thank the following for permission to use their images: 1 = Pete Hayward/Tony Nelson-Smith (reprint from Collins Guide to the Sea Shore), 2 = Peter Dyrzynda (Dyrzynda, P.E.J. 2003. Gower Peninsula, South Wales: landscapes, habitats and biodiversity), 3 = Pat O'Brien, 4 = Rowan Byrne, 5 = Amy Dale, 6 = Michelle Cronin, 7 = Patricia Byrne.



**Species 1: Common Jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*).** This is the most familiar jellyfish. It is recognised by its four purplish/pink gonad rings. The rest of the jellyfish is transparent and has numerous short tentacles around the margin of the bell (difficult to see when out of water). Up to 400mm in diameter, normally much smaller. Found from April to September. **Mild sting.**



**Species 2: Compass Jellyfish (*Chrysaora hysoscella*).** Most distinguishing characteristic is the reddish-brown 'V' shaped markings on the bell. Has 24 long tentacles dangling from the margin and four frilly mouth-arms trailing from the inside. Colour is white to yellow with brown 'V' shaped markings. Up to 500mm in diameter. July to September. **Can sting.**



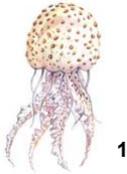
**Species 3: Barrel jellyfish (*Rhizostoma octopus*).** These jellyfish are surprisingly solid to feel and have a massive dome shape. They have a ghost white colour with purple lobes around the margin. Dangling from the centre are eight mouth-arms that resemble a cauliflower in shape. They have no tentacles but prolonged exposure **can cause an allergic reaction.** Up to 1m in diameter! All year round but most abundant in July to September.



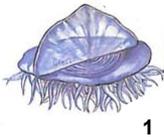
**Species 4: Blue jellyfish (*Cyanea lamarckii*).** Translucent body with blue-purplish ring inside. Masses of tentacles on the margin. Up to 300mm in diameter. Like a smaller version of the Lion's Mane. Occurs April to July, uncommon. **Stings!**



**Species 5: Lion's Mane Jellyfish (*Cyanea capillata*):** Can reach a bell diameter of 2 meters, normally much smaller. Bell margin divided into 8 lobes and 8 clusters of up to 150 tentacles each. Tentacles are longer than the oral arms. Colour varies from deep red to yellow individuals. **Warning! These jellyfish sting severely.**



**Species 6: Pelagia jellyfish (*Pelagia noctiluca*):** Bell has warts or bumps on it. Very small jellyfish, about the size of a closed fist, up to 10cm in diameter. Has only eight tentacles. Occurs autumn/winter. Similar to the common jellyfish, however they occur at different times of the year. **Warning: Can sting**



**Species 7: By-the-wind-sailor (*Velella velella*):** Not a true jellyfish, but a close relative. Bluish oval disk reaching 8cm in length. Equipped with a 'sail' that projects above the surface of the water to catch the wind and aid their dispersal. Around the margin of the float is a ring of tentacle-like fishing appendages. Can occur all year round. **Mild sting**



**Species 8: Portuguese Man O'War (*Physalia physalis*):** Again not a true jellyfish but related. Large & conspicuous float up to 30cm long & 10cm wide. Float is silver-blue with red/pink tinging, rest of colony is blue purple. **WARNING! Inflicts severe stings.**

**Species 9: Sea gooseberry (*Pleurobrachia pileus*):** Not a jellyfish at all but a Ctenophore. Shaped like a gooseberry and is transparent. Up to 20 mm long. If you look close you can see 8 ciliary plates or comb rows. **No sting.**

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Notes on Nature:

# Jellyfish

In this issue, we take a look at jellyfish and are grateful to the Irish/Welsh Ecojel Project for permission to reproduce their jellyfish ID card.



Jellyfish are much more than gelatinous blobs randomly drifting in the oceans. Individuals can grow to one metre in diameter and weigh as much as 200 kg. As a species, they are far older than the dinosaurs (over 500 million years), some are voracious predators with the ability to move purposely through the water column, and one species may be immortal.

### What is a jellyfish?

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Jellyfish are members of the phylum Cnidaria, (from the Greek word for “stinging nettle”) and the class Scyphozoa (from the Greek word for “cup,” referring to the jellyfish’s body shape). All cnidarians have a mouth in the center of their bodies, surrounded by tentacles. The jellyfish’s cnidarian relatives include corals, sea anemones and the Portuguese man-o’-war.

Jellies are composed mainly of water (96%) and use the muscles of their body wall to push against this fluid inside to create a pulsating swimming movement. Jellyfish have ‘stinging cells’ or cnidoblasts that they use to capture prey and for protection and they have a very simple radial body plan. To see light, detect smells and orient themselves, they have simple sensory nerves at the base of their tentacles. Jellyfish do not have heart, brain or lungs.



## Irish Jellies

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Ireland has 5 indigenous species of jellyfish (see ID chart):

- Barrel Jellyfish
- Lion's Mane (Ireland's most venomous jelly)
- Blue Jellyfish
- Common Jellyfish
- Compass Jellyfish

Jellyfish tagging projects such as the Irish/Welsh Ecojel Project have shown that jellyfish in the Irish Sea are not just passive drifters but appear to live in distinctly different areas, with some close to the shore and others far out to sea. For example, each year the Barrel jellyfish blooms in huge numbers off Rosslare and Wexford Harbour yet is rarely found elsewhere. Off the coast of Dublin is the preferred habitat of the Lion's Mane jellyfish while the Blue Jellyfish is most common off the south and west coasts. Jellyfish maintain their position in areas of sea by swimming upwards when the tide is coming in and swimming down when the tide is going out.

## Jellyfish Lifecycle

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Most people will recognize the adult jellyfish, with its bell-shaped body and long tentacles. However, this is just one of several stages in the life cycle of a jellyfish. The adult, or medusa, stage of a jellyfish reproduces sexually in the summertime by releasing sperm and eggs that merge to form a planula. This larval stage swims around for a few days before hooking itself on to the bottom of a smooth rock or other structure where it grows into another stage of jellyfish life, the polyp, which resembles a miniature sea anemone. During this stage, which can last for several months or years, asexual reproduction

occurs. The polyps clone themselves and bud, or strobilate, into young jellyfish called ephyra, this form then grows into the adult jellyfish. Most jellyfish species have a relatively fixed life span, which varies by species from hours to many months.

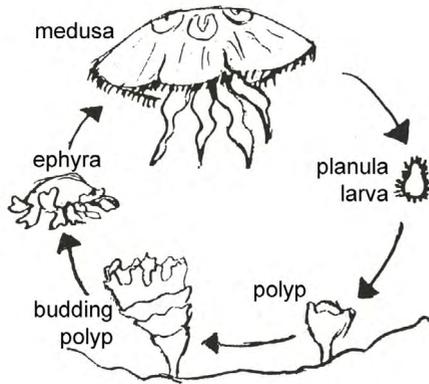


Fig 1. Lifecycle of a jellyfish.

## Jellyfish Stings

Thousands of cells called cnidoblasts cover each jellyfish tentacle. Cnidoblasts contain capsules or nematocysts containing stinging threads. When a jellyfish encounters another object, pressure inside the nematocyst causes the threads to uncoil. The stinging cells spring out like tiny darts, firing venom into their victim. The venom is a neurotoxin designed to paralyze their prey. The Box jellyfish stings in response to chemicals in the skin and well-informed Aussies wear women's pantyhose when they head out to the beach. Apparently, nylon prevents them from detecting the chemicals on skin so they can't sting.

Although a jellyfish can kill a small aquatic animal, its sting is not usually fatal to humans. It tends to cause pain, skin rashes, fever and muscle cramps. The

degree of pain and reaction to a jellyfish sting can depend on the species – larger jellyfish have larger cnidoblasts that can penetrate deeper into the skin, and some jellyfish have stronger venom than others do. However, stings from certain species such as the Box jellyfish can kill people with a reported 30- 40 deaths per year in the Philippines.

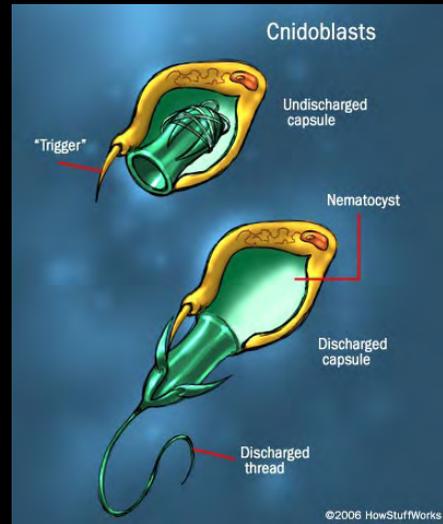


Fig 2. Jellyfish sting cell Source: <http://animals.howstuffworks.com/marine-life/jellyfish1.htm>

## Sting first aid

The guidelines below were drawn up by the Jellyfish Action Group of Ireland and Wales (which includes experts from Beaumont Poison Centre, Pre-hospital Emergency Care experts, hospital A&E consultants, local GPs, and water safety officers) and are only to be applied in Irish and Welsh waters. If travelling abroad seek advice for that specific country.

- Ensure you don't get stung yourself when aiding others.

- Remove any attached tentacles with a gloved hand, stick, or towel (if none of these is available use the tips of your fingers)
- Do not rub the affected area (this may result in further venom release)
- Rinse the affected area with sea-water (do not use fresh water, vinegar, alcohol or urine)
- Apply a 'dry cold pack' to the area (i.e. place a cold pack or ice inside a plastic bag and then wrap this package in a t- shirt or other piece of cloth)
- Seek medical attention if there is anything other than minor discomfort
- If the patient is suffering from swelling, breathing difficulties, palpitation or chest tightness then transfer to the nearest emergency department urgently



*Fig 3. Jellyfish sting.*

## Are jellyfish increasing globally?

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Jellyfish reproduce rapidly and have fast growth rates; they predate many species, while few species predate them; and they feed via touch rather than visually, so they can feed effectively at night and in turbid waters. Around the world, jellyfish blooms have had critical socio-economic impacts e.g. limiting the potential recovery of already weakened fish stocks, clogging fishing nets, causing mass mortalities of farmed salmon, or blocking the cooling water intake of power stations. Last year, it was difficult to avoid jellyfish brushing against your paddle as your seakayak slid through the water. 2013 was a bumper year for jellyfish in Irish waters; on one summer evening paddle across Dublin Bay, they were so dense at one stage it was like paddling through jelly rather than water. Later, in October 20,000 farmed salmon were killed due to a jellyfish “bloom” (a sudden, massive increase of jellyfish numbers) off Clare island, Co Mayo. Anecdotal evidence from kayak anglers in the Irish Sea supports a general view that jellies are more common. Will it be the same this year, and what is happening in the sea to encourage the growth of creatures that have the power to both fascinate and repulse?

## Possible causes of Jellyfish expansion

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Jellyfish populations may be expanding globally because of overfishing of their natural predators (such as Tuna and turtles) and the availability of excessive nutrients due to land runoff. When marine ecosystems become disturbed jellyfish can proliferate because jellyfish thrive in warmer, less-oxygenated water. It may become difficult for fish stocks to re-establish themselves in marine ecosystems once jellyfish have dominated them, because jellyfish also feed on fish eggs and larvae.

In Antarctica, overfishing of krill has led to a growth of smaller plankton called copepods, which are about 120 times smaller than krill—far too small for penguins but perfect for jellyfish, which filter small particles in the water with their tentacles rather than hunt by sight. Therefore, while penguins starve and their population crashes jellyfish thrive and dominate Antarctic waters. Acidification of the seas due to rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere is also implicated in jellyfish population growth. As ocean acidity increases numbers of hard-shelled plankton decrease, allowing jellyfish, who are immune to acidification, to fill their ecological niche, however recent research in the North Sea does not support this hypothesis and further studies are underway.

Dr Tom Doyle of the Coastal and Marine Research Centre at University College Cork has said it is very difficult to confirm if 2013 was exceptional for jellyfish. He also says that some 15 to 20 years of data would be required before one could conclude that it was a cyclical occurrence, or an increase due to warming temperatures and/or acidification of seas. Dr Doyle curates the Big Jellyfish Hunt on Facebook, (<https://www.facebook.com/ecojel>) and is part of the EcoJel project, an EU-funded initiative involving UCC and Swansea University. This project noted a slight overall increase in biomass trends of jellyfish in the Irish Sea over the past 15 years.

### **How can Sea kayakers contribute to scientific research about Jellyfish?**

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Sea kayakers are uniquely close to the sea and travel considerable distances along the Irish coast throughout the year. Most of us are keen observers of the natural world and interested in protecting and investigating the oceanic environment. We are perfectly placed to report sightings and observations to the scientific community. If you see jellyfish on your paddles your reports will be useful, don't dismiss them as 'only jellyfish' send your sightings and observations to the following: <http://www.jellyfish.ie/> use their report a

sighting link, they have lots of helpful identification information or visit The Big Jellyfish Hunt page on Facebook. If you find a tagged jellyfish report the tag to the address on the tag.

Sources:

- [www.jellyfish.ie](http://www.jellyfish.ie)
- Stung! On Jellyfish Blooms and the Future of the Ocean by Lisa-ann Gershwin, published by the University of Chicago Press.
- Are jellyfish increasing in response to ocean acidification? American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, Inc. 53(5), 2008, 2035–2040.
- Scientific American
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- Deep Sea News
- Heritage Council
- How Stuff Works
- Treehouses
- Howtowindsurf101



