

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THE OCEAN

The people of Ireland share a profound cultural bond with the sea. While bogs and oceans might seem distinct, they're deeply interconnected within the global carbon cycle. Ireland's bogs serve as one of the most effective carbon sinks on land, storing vast amounts of carbon and playing a key role in mitigating climate change. Similarly, oceans absorb a substantial portion of atmospheric CO₂. Protecting both ecosystems can amplify efforts to stabilize carbon levels, an essential goal in combating global warming.

Both bogs and oceans support unique ecosystems. Ireland's bogs are home to rare and endangered species, including culturally significant aromatic plants that grow nowhere else. Likewise, oceans foster diverse marine life that is critical to planetary health. Conservation efforts for both environments emphasize the importance of biodiversity and the urgent need to protect species from environmental degradation.

Healthy bogs regulate water flow, reduce flooding, and impact marine environments. When bogs degrade, they release stored water, increasing runoff that affects coastal ecosystems. Similarly, ocean health influences atmospheric conditions, which in turn affect bogs and their vegetation. Maintaining both ecosystems is crucial for climate resilience.

Reduce Plastic Use

Plastic waste is a major pollutant in our oceans, where it endangers marine life and breaks down into microplastics that affect the entire ecosystem, including our food chain. To address this crisis, we can adopt the "5 R's" of sustainable waste management: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot.

Refuse: Start by refusing single-use plastics whenever possible. Opt for alternatives like reusable bags, metal straws, and glass containers to avoid adding unnecessary waste to the environment.

Ireland's coastal communities, where 40% of the population resides, hold deep traditional knowledge of marine resources and coastal aromatic plants like seaweed. Inland communities have equally deep-rooted connections to boglands and their distinctive plant life. The combined approach of preserving oceans and restoring bogs strengthens cultural ties to land and sea, emphasizing sustainable practices that respect tradition while preserving biodiversity. This integrated approach can inform broader policies on agriculture, land use, and climate action, inspiring sustainable practices across Ireland and beyond.

The volatile organic compounds emitted by the sea and aquatic plants are culturally significant, yet the waters around Ireland, like many oceans worldwide, face critical threats from overfishing, pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss. While these issues may seem daunting, each of us can contribute to protecting and restoring these vital ecosystems. Ireland's ocean is a lifeline that directly impacts the wellbeing of its people. By working together and taking small, meaningful actions, we can create a wave of positive change to preserve our seas for future generations. Let's act now to save our ocean!

Reduce: Limit plastic use by choosing products with minimal packaging and by supporting brands committed to sustainable practices. This can significantly reduce the volume of plastic waste produced.

Reuse: Extend the life of plastic items by finding creative ways to reuse them. Reusable water bottles, containers, and bags help keep plastics out of the waste stream and oceans.



Recycle: Properly recycle plastic materials that can't be reused. Familiarize yourself with local recycling guidelines to ensure that plastics are processed correctly, reducing the risk of pollution.

Rot: Whenever possible, choose compostable alternatives to plastic. Compostable packaging and organic waste can “rot” back into the earth, enriching the soil instead of contributing to pollution.

Additionally, Participate in Coastal Clean-Ups: Join local beach clean-ups or organize one with friends and family. Every piece of plastic removed prevents harm to ocean life.

Support Sustainable Fishing

Ireland has a long fishing heritage, but unsustainable fishing practices can lead to the decline of fish stocks and harm marine biodiversity.

Buy Local and Sustainably Sourced Seafood: Look for certifications such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label, Sustainable Seafood Ireland (SSI), and other regional guides when purchasing seafood.

Reduce Fish Consumption: Opt for alternatives a few times a week to lessen demand on fish stocks and explore Ireland's rich variety of plant-based dishes.

Support Marine Conservation Efforts: Donate or volunteer with organizations that conserve the ocean or advocate for sustainable fishing practices in Irish waters, such as the Irish Wildlife Trust and The Irish Ocean Literacy Network. Other charitable organisations to explore include Sea Synergy Marine Awareness Research & Activity Centre, Fair Seas, Coastwatch Ireland, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Irish Basking Shark Group, Irish Wildlife Trust, An Taisce, Irish Elasmobranch Group, Maharees Conservation Association, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group and Fenit Coast Conservation.

Protect and Restore Coastal Ecosystems

Ireland's coastal habitats—like seaweed beds, salt marshes, and estuaries—are vital for marine biodiversity and act as carbon sinks that help combat climate change.

Respect Coastal Areas: Stick to paths when visiting beaches or coastal trails, and avoid disturbing nesting sites and sensitive vegetation.

Support Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): Ireland's government aims to expand MPAs to cover 30% of its waters by 2030. Advocate for well-enforced MPAs that protect critical habitats and allow marine life to recover.

Plant Native Species: In your garden, favor native plants that support biodiversity, reduce pollution from fertilizers, and prevent soil erosion that can affect coastal ecosystems.

Conserve Energy and Support Climate Action

Ocean health is directly impacted by climate change, which causes sea level rise, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events.

Reduce Your Carbon Footprint: Walk, cycle, or use public transportation. When driving, consider carpooling or switching to an electric vehicle.

Conserve Energy at Home: Switch off appliances when not in use, insulate your home, and use energy-efficient lighting to reduce your impact.

Support Climate-Friendly Policies: Advocate for policies that reduce carbon emissions, protect marine ecosystems, and support renewable energy sources in Ireland.

Spread Awareness and Educate Others

The more people know about the ocean's importance and the threats it faces, the more impactful our collective actions can be.

Share Knowledge: Talk to friends and family about what they can do to protect the ocean.

Support Ocean-Friendly Initiatives: Attend events, share social media posts, and donate to projects dedicated to ocean health. The Irish Seas Festival, Ocean Talks, and conservation efforts by organizations like Clean Coasts Ireland are all excellent ways to engage.

Stay Informed: Understanding current ocean issues helps us make better decisions. Follow Irish environmental groups, watch documentaries, and stay up to date on marine science.

World Sensorium: Ireland is an arts-led, eco-social collaboration within Ireland. Collaborating partners include **Dr Gayil Nalls and World Sensorium Conservancy, VOICE Project of the European Commission's Horizon Europe Programme** (partners: INOVA+ (Portugal), the Stichting WAAG Society (Netherlands), the SMARTlab-Inclusive Design Research Centre at University College Dublin (Ireland), EURICE (Germany), FutureFocus21c (Ireland), Living Iveragh (Ireland), RISE (Croatia), the Royal College of Art London (United Kingdom) and Brunel University London (United Kingdom).