

# Beachwatch

## Suffolk Results 2016



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2016

# 35

litter surveys were carried out on 26 beaches covering over 14km of the Suffolk coast and estuaries.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2016

# 603

volunteers took part in Beachwatch Surveys in Suffolk.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2016

# 167

balloons (whole / part) were collected from Suffolk beaches and foreshores.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2016

# 20,515

items of litter were recorded and removed from Suffolk beaches and foreshores.



KEY SUFFOLK FACTS 2016

# 79%

of litter collected in Suffolk Great British Beach Cleans, was made of plastic or polystyrene.

## Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

# Beach surveys

The AONB is proud to present the results of the litter surveys carried out by volunteers in Suffolk as part of the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch schemes in 2016.

The results help to illustrate the extent of the problem of rubbish on our beaches and estuaries, and also the fantastic efforts made by Suffolk volunteers to help tackle the problem. Beachwatch is a national scheme organised by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and coordinated in Suffolk by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Whilst Beachwatch surveys take place at quarterly intervals, the Great British Beach Clean (GBBC) is the annual event taking place on the third weekend of September and is the UK contribution to the International Coastal Clean-Up.

Top 10 Litter Items				
Rank	Litter item (Categories are taken from the MCS Survey Sheet)	Total items found	Items / km	% of total litter
1	Plastic / polystyrene pieces: 0 - 2.5 cm	3113	88.9	17.3
2	Packets: crisp, sweet, lolly, sandwich	2557	73.0	14.2
3	Plastic / polystyrene pieces: 2.5 - 50 cm	1776	50.7	9.9
4	Nylon string / cord / rope: thickness 0 – 1 cm	1734	49.5	9.6
5	Plastic caps / lids	1720	49.2	9.5
6	Plastic cutlery / trays / straws	743	21.2	4.1
7	Cotton bud sticks	720	20.6	4.0
8	String/cord/rope: thickness 1 cm +	498	14.2	2.8
9	Towels / panty liners / backing strips	401	11.5	2.2
10	Bags (e.g shopping)	393	11.2	2.2
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>13,655</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>75.8</b>

NB. The Top 10 Litter Items in Suffolk in 2016 were all of plastic composition.

Please see the Marine Conservation Society website, [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org) for the Great British Beach Clean 2016 Final Report.

### Public 43%

Items like plastic bags, drinks bottles, food containers, drinks cans, dog poo bags, glass bottles, cigarette stubs and balloons have all had a helping human hand on their journey to the beach.

### Medical 0%

Luckily we don't find much medical stuff, but it does turn up – pill packets, plasters, syringes and needles.

### Fly-Tipped 1%

Illegally disposed of items, usually big items like white goods, TVs, car parts and paint tins.

### Shipping 4%

Lots of litter gets dropped, lost or thrown overboard from small craft to massive cargo ships – this is shipping litter and can include pallets, oil drums and bits of rope.

## Sources of Litter

### Non-sourced 31%

We call it non-sourced because it's hard to work out where most of the litter we find comes from. It includes tiny little plastic and polystyrene pieces, bits of rubber, cloth, pieces of metal, wood, paper etc.

### Fishing 14%

If it helps you catch fish, we've found it – line, net, crab pots and tops, fish boxes, weights, lures and hooks.

### Sewage Related Debris 7%

Stuff people flush down the loo when it should go in the bin like condoms, cotton bud sticks, wet wipes, toilet fresheners etc.

Definitions taken from MCS Great British Beach Clean 2016 Report.

Cover image: 8th Felixstowe Scouts at Nacton Foreshore, organised by Debby Hatcher.

## 2 Beachwatch Suffolk Results 2016

# What's the problem with...

By Emma Cunningham, Senior Pollution Campaigns Officer, Marine Conservation Society (MCS)

## ...wet wipes?

Wet wipes are getting where they shouldn't be - in the sea and on our beaches. They get there because their labelling is confusing and they are flushed down the loo when they shouldn't be.

Flushed wipes readily combine with fats, oils and greases forming blockages and infamous "fatbergs" in our sewerage systems. This can result in household flooding and raw sewage being discharged into our rivers and seas. It's then a simple journey up on to our beaches, with a whole host of other sanitary waste.

Wet wipes typically contain plastic and once the wipe has started to break down and disperse it forms part of the greater problem of microplastics at sea. This microplastic, once in the oceans, is eaten by zooplankton, which forms the base of the food chain; they are eaten by the fish we eat. Wipes either whole or in pieces which end up as litter on our beaches, can then be mistaken for food by all sorts of precious marine life.

The public are unsurprisingly confused about the different types of wipes, and what different types of labelling mean. As a result, many wipes not designed to be flushed are increasingly being flushed down the toilet. Unfortunately, even those wipes labelled 'flushable' can still cause blockages as they do not meet Water UK standards (the union that brings together water companies from across the UK), which are the most stringent.

## How big is the problem?

We have seen a near 7-fold increase on wet wipe litter levels on UK beaches over the last decade and the cost to the water companies and to ourselves as taxpayers in dealing with these blockages runs into millions of

pounds every year. MCS launched their 'Wet Wipes Turn Nasty (When You Flush Them)' campaign in 2016 to highlight to the public why flushing wet wipes is a really bad thing and only paper, pee and poo belong down the loo. Retailers and manufacturers are being lobbied to clearly label their wet wipe products with a 'DON'T FLUSH' message on their packaging so they go in the bin not down the toilet.

**Take action>>** Sign the MCS petition for clearer labelling at [www.wetwipesturnnasty.com](http://www.wetwipesturnnasty.com) and remember the three P's... paper, pee and poo only down the loo! Please spread the word - even if the product says it is flushable, biodegradable or that it will disperse, it should not go down the toilet.

## ...balloons and sky lanterns?

When sky lanterns and balloons are released, they don't just disappear. They float back down to earth where they are the same as any other litter. MCS saw an astonishing rise in the



amount of balloon litter from their Great British Beach Clean 2016 event, a 50% increase when compared to 2015 figures; this problem just isn't going away!

MCS has been working hard to influence Councils across the UK to ban the release of sky lanterns and balloons on their land. So far, more than fifty councils have taken this step, which is great! But many are yet to do so.

**Take action>>** Check out the council list to see if your council has already brought in a ban [www.mcsuk.org/url/dontletgo](http://www.mcsuk.org/url/dontletgo) If not, please contact them to ask them to do so; MCS have plenty of downloadable resources to help you.



# Summary of results 2016

Beach No.	Beach Name	Organiser & Organisation	Number of surveys	Total volunteers	Length surveyed (m)	Total bags collected	Total weight (kg)	Total litter items	Average Items / 100m
1	Lowestoft North	Victoria Nicholls, local group	1	40	100	0.5	1	189	189.0
2	Pakefield	Clare Beatwell, Essex & Suffolk Water	1	28	100	7	?	164	164.0
3	Pakefield to Kessingland	Clare Beatwell, Essex & Suffolk Water	1	28	100	7	?	223	223.0
4	Kessingland	Clare Beatwell, Essex & Suffolk Water	1	12	100	12	?	358	358.0
5	Southwold: The Denes	Benedict Orchard, Adnams	3	198	550	76	?	1160	209.4
6	Dunwich Village South	Andy Jefferies, Wild Days Conservation	1	7	100	1	1	439	439.0
7	Minsmere Beach	Matt Parrot, RSPB Minsmere	1	24	200	24	?	624	312.0
8	Sizewell	Margaret Stanway, 1st Leiston Guides	1	7	100	6	?	286	286.0
9	Aldeburgh: Moot Hall to Lifeboat Station	Beverley Rogers, Suffolk Wildlife Trust	1	19	100	2	1	587	587.0
10	Aldeburgh: Fort Green, north	Ellie Scotts, AXA Ipswich	1	18	8000	12	1	878	11.0
10	Aldeburgh: Fort Green, north	Louise Ragosta, UK Power Networks, Ipswich	1	9	100	1	?	49	49.0
11	Slaughden	Alison Andrews, Aldeburgh Yacht Club	1	2	100	13	1	40	40.0
12	Orford Beach: Sudbourne beach - Orford Ness	Dave Fincham, National Trust, Orfordness	1	5	400	4	?	532	133.0
13	Shingle Street: Coastguard Cottages to The Beacon	Lynn Allen, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB	1	17	100	2	1	1640	1640.0
14	Shingle Street	Catherine Lindsay-Davies, Shingle Street Residents Association	1	15	100	0.5	?	178	178.0
15	Bawdsey: East Lane South	Lynda Gilbert, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB	1	11	100	17	1	2385	2385.0
15	Bawdsey: East Lane South	Lynn Allen, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB	3	53	300	12	3	7289	2429.7
16	Bawdsey Quay	Barbara Zion, local group	1	4	100	1	1	824	824.0
17	Felixstowe: 13th hole to The Dip	Tim Pearse, The Rotary Club of Felixstowe, Landguard	2	8	410	2	2	729	175.8
18	Felixstowe: The Dip to Cobbolds Point	Malcolm Stafford, local group	2	2	780	3	2	69	12.8
19	Felixstowe: Cobbolds Point to Spa Pavilion	Keith Horn, The Felixstowe Society	2	47	200	15	2	298	149.0
20	Felixstowe Pier, North	Paul Bailey, 1st Felixstowe Sea Scouts	1	17	100	2	1	325	325.0
21	Felixstowe Beach: Manor Rd. Car Park to Orford Rd.	Deborah Wargate, East Suffolk Greenprint Forum	1	3	100	0.25	1	127	127.0
22	Trimley Marsh, River Orwell	Steve Mitchell, BT; Andrew Excell, Suffolk Wildlife Trust; and Suffolk Scouts	1	5	20	0.75	1	554	2770.0
23	Levington Foreshore, River Orwell	Ian Angus, Levington Parish Council	1	6	1500	12	?	41	2.7
24	Nacton foreshore, River Orwell	Debby Hatcher, 8th Felixstowe Scouts	1	15	250	3	1	247	98.8
25	Erwarton foreshore, River Stour	Chloe Chancellor, Erwarton Parish Council	1	1	100	0.25	1	95	95.0
26	Stutton Ness, River Stour	Paul Lusher, Stutton Parish Council	1	2	100	1	1	185	185.0
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>35</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>14310</b>	<b>237.25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20515</b>	<b>14398.1</b>

**Additional Commitment** In addition to the four seasonal Beachwatch surveys, many of our teams carry out beach cleaning more frequently, collecting beach litter on a monthly, weekly or even daily basis. Many local communities and individuals undertake independent beach cleans and we are very grateful to everyone for their valuable contribution in helping to look after the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and wider marine environment.

**Missing data** Events were also undertaken in 2016 by Benhall Primary School, BT, Dunwich Heath National Trust, Holbrook Scouts, Hutchison Ports UK, Saxmundham Free School and Southwold Pier. For various reasons, such as not submitting data to MCS or missing the deadline, the results from these events were unable to be included in the analysis of the Suffolk Results, but we would like to thank all of those involved for their efforts. NB. In order for a beach clean to become an official Beachwatch survey, the event must be registered with MCS, the litter collected from a 100m section must be recorded and that data must be submitted to MCS within a specified timeframe.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

**4 Kessingland**



Organised by: Clare Beatwell, Essex & Suffolk Water. Photo courtesy of Essex & Suffolk Water.

**Aldeburgh: The Haven**



Organised by: Dave Alley, BT Voice and Multi-Media team. Photo courtesy of BT.

**8 Orfordness**



Organised by Orfordness Angling Club. Photo courtesy of Orfordness Angling Club.

**15 Bawdsey: East Lane South**



Organised by: Lynn Allen, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.

**19 Felixstowe: Cobbolds Point to the Spa Pavilion**



Organised by Keith Horn, The Felixstowe Society.

**5 Southwold: The Denes**



Organised by Ben Orchard, Adnams Plc. Photo courtesy of Adnams Plc.

**Felixstowe: John Bradfield Viewing Area**



Organised by Rags Hope, Hutchison Ports UK

**17 Felixstowe: 13th hole to The Dip**



Organised by Tim Pearse, Rotary Club of Felixstowe, Landguard.

**22 Trimley Marsh, River Orwell**



Organised by Steve Mitchell, BT, Andrew Excell, SWT and Martin Agar, Suffolk Scouts.



# Marine Protected Areas (MPA) for our seas



By Emily Polling, Volunteer Campaigner, Marine Conservation Society (MCS)

**D**ecades of damage and pollution have left our seas struggling to recover, and we are now facing a situation more dire than ever before. Our oceans are rapidly losing their biodiversity with species that were once common now facing a serious threat of extinction. In the last century alone we've lost 90% of our biggest fish, sharks and whales. The Marine Conservation Society (MCS), the UK's leading marine charity, urgently needs your help to safeguard our remaining marine wildlife and habitats.

Oceans are the largest ecosystem on earth, covering 71% of our planet's surface. Healthy oceans are essential for our survival, yet in the UK less than 2% of them are protected. We are getting dangerously close to causing irreparable damage to our seas, but it's not too late to turn back the clock. One of the best routes to reversing damage and saving our marine ecosystems is to establish and maintain Marine Protected Areas (MPA's). MPA's are special regions of marine environment that are protected from harmful activities to give them a greater chance of recovery.

The Marine Conservation Society has been fighting tirelessly to create an ecologically coherent network of MPA's and progress has been made. 50



Marine Conservation Zones have been set up in English waters, and other protected areas are being created around Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, there is still a long way to go. Later this year Westminster Government will consult on the final round of Marine Conservation Zones for designation. This final round will be our last chance to get protection for these special areas.

## Orford Inshore

One of the sites being considered for protection is Orford Inshore. Located 14km off the coast, off-shore from the Alde-Ore estuary, Suffolk, it is home to a wide array of life such as skates, rays, small spotted cat-sharks, sprat,

sandeels and lemon sole. The area is vitally important not only as a spawning ground and nursery for many of these species, but also as a plentiful feeding ground for transient animals such as harbour porpoises. As well as hosting a huge variety of marine life, Orford Inshore is also home to internationally important populations of seabirds. This site is sadly at great risk as it has not yet been designated as a Marine Conservation Zone. Like many other areas across the UK, Orford Inshore is in serious danger of losing its rich diversity of wildlife if it is not protected.

**Take action>>>** Please give your support by joining the Ocean Devotion campaign, see below.



The UK's coast and seas are home to some of the most beautiful marine life in the world, offering sanctuary to a huge range of species from the tiny jewel anemones to giants such as the basking shark. If we act now we can ensure that vulnerable areas get the protection they deserve. The Marine Conservation Society desperately needs you to stand with them and take positive action towards creating sustainable use of the seas and protection for nationally important wildlife and habitats. Please sign up to our new Ocean Devotion campaign at: [www.mcsuk.org/oceandevotion](http://www.mcsuk.org/oceandevotion)

# Essex & Suffolk Water team

make a difference to their local beach!

by Clare Beatwell, Essex & Suffolk Water

The sun shone brightly on the team of 26 volunteers from Essex & Suffolk Water Lowestoft area, as we embarked on our first Beachwatch survey covering Kessingland, Pakefield and Corton. None of us knew quite what to expect or how much rubbish there would be, but by the end of the day our eyes had been well and truly opened to the problem of marine litter and what our beaches are subjected to on a daily basis.

The first task of the day was to measure out two 100m stretches of beach from where we would be recording a detailed account of the litter found and removed, for MCS. We set off armed with gloves, bags, litter sticks and bag hoops, all kindly provided for free by Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and Waveney Norse. The kit is crucial not just to keep everyone safe, but also to make the job easier as well!

At first glance, the survey areas appeared relatively litter-free, but upon closer inspection we soon realised all was not as it seemed. We mainly collected plastic items – sections of cups, bottles, lids, sweet wrappers etc, but there were also some large unsightly well-rusted metal



The morning team!

items. It transpired that plastic always constitutes over half of the litter found in any Beachwatch survey, and our efforts certainly reflected that statistic. We also found a number of what turned out to be crystal jellyfish, stranded along the beach. These were recorded for the MCS Jellyfish Survey, [www.mcsuk.org/sightings/jellyfish.php](http://www.mcsuk.org/sightings/jellyfish.php)

Some of the beach visitors - making the most of the glorious day - were keen to know what we were up to! It was good to explain what was going on, publicise the scheme and the issue of marine pollution.

After a productive and hot morning we had a well-deserved lunch break in the sunshine. Lynn Allen from Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, who co-ordinates Beachwatch in Suffolk on behalf of MCS, joined us to present an

informative talk about why the work we were doing was so important to the wildlife found in and around our seas, as well as visually improving the appearance of the beach. We felt proud that our effort could make such a difference to the environment and stop the sea animals consuming or harming themselves on the litter.

In the afternoon we drove along the coast to Corton where we undertook another Beachwatch survey. By the end of the day, we had covered a massive area stretching from Kessingland, to Pakefield and all the way to Lowestoft Pier! We all agreed that it had been a fun and rewarding day, and having collected over 20 bags of litter we had made a positive difference to the local environment as well. As a result, we have decided to take part in more Beachwatch surveys in the future on a more regular basis, and hopefully other organisations will follow our example.



Having a well-earned rest and enjoying the view!



Litter gathered from the survey area.

# Be part of something BIG!

**H**ave you ever thought about taking part in Beachwatch? Well don't put it off any longer!

Some of our best-loved marine wildlife is under threat from the waste and litter in our seas, with hundreds of species accidentally eating or becoming entangled in litter. It is also dangerous for people and damaging to our tourism and fishing industries. We all have a part to play in turning the tide on litter. Plastic litter on beaches has increased 140% since 1994. Plastic never biodegrades, it just breaks down into small pieces but does not disappear. Microplastic particles are now found inside filter feeding animals and amongst sand grains on our beaches.

Join an event or organise your own and be part of the most influential fight against marine litter in the UK! With cleans throughout the year there are so many opportunities for you to look after your beach. The flagship national event is the Great British Beach Clean which always takes place on the third weekend of September, 2017 dates being the 15th – 18th. Almost 6,000 volunteers took part nationally in last year's event, picking up an incredible 268,384 pieces of litter. The Great British Beach Clean is the UK contribution to the International Coastal Clean-Up in which over 700,000 people participated across more than 100



Members of The Felixstowe Society taking part in the 2016 Great British Beach Clean.

countries last year. If you have more time to offer, then sign up for Beachwatch and take part in 4 events each year!

Beachwatch/Great British Beach Clean Organisers are the people who make the surveys happen. Without them, our beaches would be dirtier and less loved, and our wildlife would be more at risk of entanglement. Most importantly, MCS wouldn't have any data on the litter around our coast. On every Beachwatch/Great British Beach Clean survey, volunteers record the litter they collect and send the data to MCS. This provides information about trends, sources and where to focus campaigns to stop litter from getting to the beach in the first place. In recent years, data gathered from Beachwatch/Great British Beach Clean has been fundamental in bringing the plastic bag levy into force in England, and

more recently, persuading cotton wool bud manufacturers to make the sticks from paper instead of plastic.

Anyone can be involved in Beachwatch and any level of commitment to Beachwatch or the Great British Beach Clean is welcomed, but a year-round commitment at a chosen location would be fantastic! It's a great way of bringing communities together, and for many existing teams, Beachwatch events have become a real social occasion. It is a brilliant opportunity for businesses to add to their green credentials too, with companies viewing involvement as a way of 'giving something back'. Age is no barrier either – toddlers take part to people in their 90's!

**Take action>>** To find out how to 'Get Involved' please see below and make 2017 the year that you do!

## Get involved

Thanks to the enthusiasm, commitment and determination of everyone involved, Beachwatch continues to gain momentum in Suffolk. With over 76km of coast and 187km of estuary foreshore, there is plenty of opportunity for people to participate.

For more information about becoming involved in Beachwatch in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, please contact Lynn Allen, Countryside Project Officer, **01394 445225**, [lynn.allen@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.allen@suffolk.gov.uk) or go to [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

For more information about the work of the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) contact **01989 566017** or go to [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)

Grateful thanks to Adnams for providing Adnams drinks vouchers for all Great British Beach Clean participants.

