

# Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners



“Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales 2009”

## Annual Report 2010



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### Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners

David Kennard, Chairman

Edward Male, Vice Chairman

David Jones, Secretary/Fund raising

Ceri Jones, Safety and Diving Officer

Meg Pugh, Public Relations Officer

Daryl Walsh, Treasurer



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 ABOUT US

While the impacts of litter washed up or left on our shoreline can easily be seen, the same cannot be said for marine litter that is below the surface of the ocean. Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners or N.A.R.C for short are a voluntary group of divers with a passion for keeping the underwater environment in Pembrokeshire as pristine as it should be. Since its inception in 2005 by local diver Dave Kennard and Keep Wales Tidy the group has carried out over 70 underwater clean-ups and a number of awareness raising events.



N.A.R.C can be found at a number of sites along the coastline throughout the diving season, collecting litter that is often having a negative impact on the habitat and the wildlife it supports.



*The kitchen sink*



*Releasing an entangled dog fish*

Divers descend in buddy pairs armed with scissors, bags, trays, lifting bags and a great belief in what they are doing. Dives can last almost an hour in which litter is collected, bagged and sent to the surface for retrieval by a support boat. The diversity of litter found on dives is staggering with mobile phones, shopping trolleys, bicycles, revolving chairs, skate boards, batteries and quite literally the

kitchen sink! The highest presence of litter is from recreational fishing with weights, rods, hooks and endless amounts of line retrieved from dives all around the county.

The impacts upon wildlife are only too apparent with fishing line often cut from spider crabs and lobsters, dog fish released from hooks and lost crab pots ghost fishing. The litter can also be a hazard to divers and other water users. Once retrieved the various items are cleaned, sorted, recorded and recycled where possible.



*Entangled Spider Crabs being released*

## 1.2 THE BENEFITS

The group is doing its best to reduce the amount of litter in the underwater environment. By removing rubbish from the sea bed it makes the underwater environment a cleaner and safer place for wildlife and other water users. We believe the following benefit from NARC's actions:

- Marine wildlife - less entanglement, decrease in potential ghost fishing in lost fishing gear
- Bathers – less sharp and entangling hazards
- Divers - less entanglement hazards from lost line, ropes, nets
- Leisure craft users – fewer foreign objects on the seabed to hit and less lost nets, rope etc to entangle propellers
- Anglers – a reduction in snagging on litter and adding more litter to the marine environment

It is not only the obvious marine wildlife such as seabird and seals that benefit from less marine litter. The following pictures show a pink seafan before and after being cleaned. Pink seafans are a warm water soft-coral at the northern limit of their geographical distribution in Pembrokeshire. They grow at less than 5mm per year and can live for over a hundred years. They are specially listed for conservation action in the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

The picture on the left shows the seafan covered in lost angling line which had been trapped by a discarded soft drink can. The second shows it after fifteen minutes effort to cut it free of lost line. It is not very healthy but at least has more chance than it did.





*An entangled Smoothhound at Stackpole Quay*



*Litter from Hobbs Point*



*An entangled Smoothhound at Stackpole Quay*



*Litter from Hobbs Point*

## 2. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT UNDERWATER LITTER

NARC was formed by concerned divers who had become aware of the increasing amount of litter they found underwater and the damage caused to marine habitats and wildlife. As divers, we did not know where to turn to help us combat the problem, so NARC was formed to make a start. Most of the volunteer base is still local but since its formation the group has gone from strength to strength and now includes volunteers from all over South Wales.

Whilst also carrying out underwater clean-up events the group are always looking for more proactive ways to limit the amount of Marine Litter.



*BBC website covering NARC work*

Raising awareness of the issue is an important part of the work.

Since its inception NARC has:

- Produced a bi-lingual leaflet which is available from most dive centres in Pembrokeshire
- Set up a website – [www.narc-cc.org.uk](http://www.narc-cc.org.uk)
- Given educational talks about marine litter and shown people what a small group of voluntary divers can do to try and fight the problem
- Visited Ireland, funded by Keep Wales Tidy, to promote the idea to Irish dive clubs.
- Produced 2 awareness raising videos
- Produced Interpretation Boards and displayed them at a number of events

The group has also used local and national media to help raise awareness of marine litter and has had coverage on the BBC National UK news at ONE, HTV Welsh News, Newyddion, BBC Wales Today, BBC XRAY, Channel 4 Born to be Wild, BBC Wildlife Detectives and a number of National radio stations and newspapers.



*National Coverage on the BBC UK News at One*

### 3. RECOGNITION OF NARC'S WORK

In its first year, NARC won the Beach Improvement category and the Peter Cambridge Trophy for voluntary organisations and schools working to improve their local environment in Keep Wales Tidy's Tidy Wales Awards 2006.

In 2009 NARC were voted the "Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales" by the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action. This is one of the most prestigious awards for the voluntary sector.



*NARC - the Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales*

In 2010 NARC were finalists in the Keep Wales Tidy Awards in the "Long Term Effort" category.

#### Endorsements of NARC's work from NARC supporters

##### **Sue Burton Pembrokeshire SAC Officer (Special Area of Conservation)**

"Not only are the members of N.A.R.C. doing their individual bit to help make the marine environment a cleaner and more natural place to be, for themselves and fellow users (divers/fishermen..), but they are also improving the environment for the wildlife. N.A.R.C s activities help to fulfil some of the required actions from the Pembrokeshire Marine S.A.C Management scheme (under refuse and litter , and raising awareness).It is for this reason that the relevant authorities group for the S.A.C. chose to help fund some of N.A.R.C. s activities in 2007."

##### **Simon Preddy (KEEP WALES TIDY)**

"N.A.R.C. have made an invaluable contribution to the Pride in Our Communities project within Pembrokeshire. They have raised the awareness of the problem of fly-tipping around our waterways and undertaken activities to clean up the mess. The divers have willingly and consistently given their time to help improve our local environment."

##### **JIMMY McVEIGH AN TAISCE (Clean coast Officer)**

"As part of the Clean Coasts Project David Kennard of N.A.R.C. came over to Ireland to teach Irish divers, including members of the Irish Underwater Councils about how to conduct underwater clean ups. This was a very successful exchange of knowledge and a number of dive groups have undertaken clean ups since N.A.R.C.'s visit. Their presentation was very informative and left the Irish divers with the required skills to conduct clean ups of their own. We hope that N.A.R.C will be able to make it over to Ireland in the future to give further presentations, their enthusiasm for the protection and preservation of the marine environment is infectious."

##### **Kate Lock (Skomer Marine Nature Reserve)**

"N.A.R.C volunteers do a superb job of clearing the sea bed of litter including miles of angling line, bucket loads of lead weights and fishing pots. The litter if not cleared and kills and damages marine life. Monofilament line tangles fish and crabs and also cuts into the soft tissue of sponges and corals like the pink sea fan,(a UK protected species).Public awareness of the damage caused by marine litter is needed and N.A.R.C. plays a key role in promoting the awareness through their work. In the

Skomer Marine Nature Reserve we are particularly grateful of the efforts of N.A.R.C. where the quantities of lost tackle below popular angling sites is of concern."

### Gill Bell (Marine Conservation Society)

"N.A.R.C. has been very supportive of M.C.S. activities within Wales and in addition to promoting marine conservation, B.A.P. species recording and sustainable fishing through the Good Fish Guide, they have also carried out two underwater clean surveys as part of the M.C.S. Beachwatch 2008 weekend"

### Dr Lou Luddington, (Marine Biologist & NARC Volunteer)

"I find it very distressing seeing litter when I am diving or snorkelling, especially if there is potential for entanglement or damage to marine life. Volunteering with NARC gives me the chance to clear up some of this litter as part of an effective team whilst also raising public awareness of the problem. Discarded or lost anglers line and tackle are a particular problem at popular angling spots. Part of NARC's role is to highlight this problem and encourage anglers to reduce loss of tackle by using the appropriate lead weights (ones without barbs for rocky coastal fishing areas) or by switching to biodegradable fishing line and lures. This is a fantastic hands-on project which I am proud to support!"



*NARC on the CBBC Newsround website*



#### 4. 2010 CELEBRATING 6 YEARS OF NARC

##### Manorbier and Stackpole Quay - May 9th

The weather gods were on our side as we finally kicked off a busy diving season. We boarded Volsung at nine am with a BBC film crew (see picture) in tow to cover our first clean-up of the year. We headed to a stretch of coast just off Manorbier beach which we had never tried before. The amount of angling litter we found including 2 lost lobster pots suggest that this is a site that will see a repeat visit. We released entangled dog fish, Pollock and a lobster. Next came Stackpole Quay and a great effort by 9 volunteers saw us lift over 200 weights, 100 hooks, line, cans, bottles, a flask, copper tubing, a crab hook and cloths. A fantastic start to the year with the day sponsored by the Milford Haven Port Authority. The footage went out on Wales Today and Newyddion. **Check out the BBC coverage [here](#)**



##### Skomer Marine Nature Reserve - June 5<sup>th</sup>

Once again sunshine greeted our departure for our second clean-up event of the year and the first visit to Skomer Marine Nature Reserve for 2010. A full boat brimming with 12 eager divers was soon empty (well apart from Andy of course) as everyone made the giant stride into the water off Low Point. An hour or so later and we were sorting through over 200 weights, 500 hooks, line, cans and plastic bottles. We also tried a new site with 2 divers spending 40 mins on the hunt for underwater litter. It is great to say we found the site to be just how it should be, free from manmade objects. Needless to say we will be back to Skomer and Low Point through the season in an attempt to collect more of the litter that is there.



**Hobbs Point - June 11th**

Our first dip in the murky waters off Hobbs Point threw up the usual array of manmade items that seem to find their way into an estuary of European conservation importance. 8 divers managed to find and lift amongst other things 6 lobster pots, 4 fishing rods, weights and hooks, bottles, cans, glass, pottery, rope, a scooter, a bike, CDs, tools, a torch, wire, steel, clothing, sparks plugs, batteries, rubber and metres of line. A great effort considering the usual 1 metre or less of visibility. A big thanks to the shore helpers Daryl, Ceri and for safety boat and assistance from the WMVS and Alistair from rudders boats yard. With all the divers commenting on the amount of litter still left at this site we look forward to trying to collect more rubbish from this area of the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation in the coming season.

**Milford Marina - June 26<sup>th</sup>**

As part of Pembrokeshire Fish week we dived into Milford Marina to carry out our second ever clean-up of this busy maritime area of Milford. Over 10,000 people were present for the day and lots of them witnessed us bring up shopping trolleys, traffic cones, bottles, cans, glass, plastics, tyres and metal. A great effort by 6 divers and our ever faithful shore support. Hopefully this dive went a long way to raising awareness of the amount of litter that finds its way into the ocean. A big thanks to the MVS for supplying a boat and assistance and for the MHPA for sponsoring the day.



**Stackpole Quay - June 27th**

Once again as part of fish week we headed down to Stackpole Quay to get involved in an educational day aimed at children. The marine day involved engaging families in rockpooling, netting and all things fishy down at Stackpole. We did a shore dive and managed to collect weights, hooks, plastic and cans which were displayed to the children alongside the amazing marine life found on the day.

**Skomer MNR - July 27<sup>th</sup>**

Our second visit of the year to Skomer saw 10 volunteers joined by the BBC to cover our clean-up. After 50 mins of diving we managed to lift cans, bottles, pieces of fishing rod, 100's of weights, hooks, lures and metres of line. We also managed to free an entangled dog fish and rather sad looking Tompot blenny (in the picture). Excellent coverage on the UK and Welsh news along with a number of radio stations was huge in raising awareness of marine litter and the impacts it can have.

The coverage saw over 300 hits on our website, lots of new Facebook members and heaps of emails showing support for NARC. The second dive saw us visit Wooltack Point to explore whether this current swept area of Jack Sound needed a clean-up dive. A small 30 minute window of slack water allowed us to drop in and collect weights, hooks and lures and ascertain that this amazing area of Skomer MNR could indeed do with a future clean-up. A big thanks to all the volunteers, Andy the Skipper and the BBC crew for joining us on the boat and covering the story.



Check out the BBC National coverage [here](#) and the Newsround website [here](#)

**Skomer MNR - August 21st**

Hot on the heels of a mid week clean-up came our third visit of the year to Skomer MNR. We departed Dale with an overcast sky and rain interrupted by drizzle, a typical August day then. This weekend we were joined by members of Banbury Dive Club who contacted us after hearing about NARC on the BBC news. Needless to say it was great to have an extra boat full of divers keen to get in and help clean up part of this special Marine Nature Reserve. After giving the Banbury members a run through the clean-up equipment and the dive site we joined forces and went on the search of marine litter. Due to the numbers we were able to cover two sites, Low Point and West Hook. An hour or so later we had collected almost 100 weights, glass bottles, clothing, over 200 hooks and lures and released an entangled Lobster and managed to cut free a smothered Pink Sea Fan (see

pictures below of before and after shots). A great effort by 12 volunteer divers and big thanks to Banbury for providing a boat and 6 of the dive team!



*Cutting free a Pink Sea Fan*

### **Your Stackpole event - Sept 11th**

NARC were invited to attend a Stackpole event organised by The National Trust to celebrate the Stackpole estate. We took along some interpretation boards, leaflets and banners to raise awareness of the work we do in the waters off the estate. It was a great day attended by 100s of people many of whom visited the Narc stand to learn more about what we do. Earlier in the month we also dived at Hobbs Point to collect some footage of the underwater litter found there. Thankfully and unusually the visibility wasn't bad and we managed to capture footage of a lost lobster pot and commercial net still catching crabs and anglers tackle, a bike, lawnmower and various other bits and pieces you would not expect to find in a Marine Special Area of Conservation.

### **Stackpole Quay - Sept 18th**

7 volunteer divers including some new volunteers left Dale aboard Volsung at 9.00am sharp with the sun shining on a great September day. Our 4th visit of the season to fisherman's point saw 5 metre viz and glassy sea conditions greet us as we rounded Stackpole Head. After an hour's worth of air we had bagged just over 200 lead weights, 100 hooks and lures, line, spark plugs, sunglasses, cans, bottles and a diving mask. The rocky crevices often had piles of up to 15 weights at a time providing frustrating ground for anglers. Hopefully our new leaflets with the Pembrokeshire Federation of Angling coaches will help visiting anglers decide on the best rigs for the ground.





**Hobbs Point - Oct 3rd**

Our last trip of the year to Hobbs Point saw us joined by the BBC X-ray team. They spent a number of hours filming our clean up at Hobbs with the episode airing on the BBC. The conditions and visibility were kind and served up an unusual 3 odd metres meaning that finding litter was relatively easy. Between 5 divers and 45 minutes of compressed air we managed to collect a wide array of non nautical items including glasses, jars, cans, shoes, satellite dish, lawn mower, computer, mirror, kettle, scooter, skate boards, bike, stereo and batteries. With a more nautical feel we managed to lift angling litter, a reel, lobster pot and a fishing net which contained a number of dead crabs.

The maritime volunteer service provided the necessary boat cover and we were lucky to have 3 shore based volunteers to help record and sort out the litter. A fantastic effort by all involved and we left with a feeling of not only making another dent in the amount of litter in the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC but also of raising awareness. Claire Palmer of the MHPA joined us on the day (pictured) and we thanked her for the amazing support given by the Port Authority as sponsors on NARC.

**Skomer MNR - 15/16th Oct**

Two days of diving in the Marine Reserve have pretty much wrapped up a fantastic season of clean-up diving for the gang. The weekend saw volunteers bag almost 600 weights at 4 sites within the Reserve. Wooltack Point gives a very small slack window where the water only stops moving for about 30 mins before its time to start making your way back to the surface. With fantastic 5 metre viz and Jack Sound providing a spectacular backdrop a quick dip saw us collect over 100 lead weights, spark plugs, 3 fishing reels and heaps of line and hooks. Low Point threw up over 200 weights with West Hook also providing lead, line and lures.



### Park Biodiversity Day 16th October

Not only were we out on the ocean over the weekend but we were also raising awareness of the Group and Marine Litter by attending a biodiversity event organised by Planed. A number of organisations were invited to share information about their work and how it helps keep Pembrokeshire special. There were a number of presentations over the day including an excellent talk by BBC wildlife vet Steve Leonard. Interpretation boards, pop-up displays and leaflets were provided showing how we carry out our clean-up dives throughout the County.

### 4.1 Other work in 2010

- NARC keeps a project website up to date [www.narc-cc.org.uk](http://www.narc-cc.org.uk) which contains information on the group and saw 300 hits in one day after the BBC National News Coverage.
- Developed a new leaflet with specific sponsorship from Chevron



**NARC Leaflet**



**NARC website**

- Developed a [new video](#) demonstrating the work of the group which has been viewed 100's of times on YOUTUBE and the website.
- Gave a talk at a Marine Litter Conference and other numerous events.
- Met with Pembrokeshire Federation of Angling Coaches to discuss plans for tackle tips for anglers.
- Provided information to the National Trust Wardens in Swansea regarding angling litter and provided images.
- Displayed boards and information at a number of events.

## 5. INCOME EXPENDITURE 2010

### 5.1 Income

Funder	Amount
WCVA	£82.60
Keep Wales Tidy	£660.00
Milford Haven Port Authority	£3500.00
Draig	£300.00
Hywel Davies	£100.00
Environment Wales	£1820.00
Total Income 2010	£6462.60
Balance carried over from 2009	£4637.05
Total Budget	£11099.65

### 5.2 Expenditure

Item/Services	Amount
Ogwr Sub Aqua Club	£150.00
Dive Master Insurance	£481.79
Boat Charter	£400.00
Boat Charter	£350.00
Boat Charter	£117.50
Simon Safety	£283.04
Boat Charter	£250.00
Health & Safety Sundries	£118.41
Boat Charter	£30.00
Remar Ltd	£55.11
Boat Charter	£350.00
HDS (Air)	£72.00
HDS (Lifting Bags)	£161.60
Boat Charter	£750.00
HDS (Air)	£58.50
Boat Charter	£360.00
Boat Charter	£350.00
Draig (Banner)	£243.23
Total Expenditure 2010	£4581.18
Total Income 2010 less Expenditure	£6518.47
Carry forward to 2011	£6518.47

## 6. PLANS FOR 2011

While 2010 was very successful in terms of fundraising (income table) the group needs to attract more support to achieve many of the aims for 2011. At present we have almost enough funds to carry out our planned clean-up events for 2011 with boat charter carrying the greatest costs even with a reduced rate from skippers showing support of the project. Funding for a project providing anglers with site specific tackle tips is yet to be spent which will decrease the carry forward total by £1800. To successfully carry out the project plans listed below NARC needs to not only keep the kind support of our current sponsors but to attract new funders. We hope this report shows our existing sponsors the value of NARC's work and the value of their contributions to supporting it, and encourages them to continue and others to add their support.

NARC plans to celebrate its seventh year with an increased programme of clean-up events, more effort to raise public awareness about seabed litter and NARC's efforts to reduce it and to support other groups to start similar projects.

<b>Diving/Clean-up events</b>	<b>Education and Awareness raising</b>	<b>New schemes</b>
15 Clean-up dives are already organised for 2011 with hopefully more dates to be confirmed	Develop site specific leaflets at angling hotspots in an attempt to raise awareness of the correct tackle to use	Develop the angling bin scheme which will allow anglers to dispose of used line
The group are looking at new sites to explore.	Continuous updating of the website which has had 1000+ visits this year	
	Continue to raise awareness and build up video footage library	
	Purchase Video Equipment which will allow us to document clean-up dives and the impact upon the habitat and wildlife	



## 7. THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The group would like to thank all the sponsors and funders for 2010 whose support is crucial for the project to succeed.

Blaise Bullimore and Sue Burton Pembrokeshire Marine SAC  
Mari Williams and Keep Wales Tidy  
Coastal Cottages of Pembrokeshire  
Claire Palmer and Milford Haven Port Authority  
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  
Jo Horsley and Environment Wales  
Ross Porter at Draig Business Services

NARC would also like to thank Elin Davies for the free translation, the Skomer MNR team, The MVS, Andy Truelove, Alastair @ Rudders and all the dive clubs who kindly offer their ribs and divers.

**Lastly and most importantly many, many thanks to all the NARC volunteers who freely give up their time for this good cause. Thanks to everyone for another fantastic year!**