



**ON ALMOST EVERY DIVE
NARC RELEASES
ENTANGLED MARINE
WILDLIFE**



**LOST LOBSTER POTS IN
SKOMER MARINE
NATURE RESERVE**



**OUR RECORD IS 730
ANGLING WEIGHTS IN 1
DIVE AT STACKPOLE
QUAY**



**THE DIVERSITY OF
LITTER IS STAGGERING.
WE HAVE EVEN FOUND
THE KITCHEN SINK!**

NEPTUNE'S ARMY OF RUBBISH CLEANERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Winner of “Most Admired Voluntary Organisation in Wales”



Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners (NARC) is an award winning registered charity, made up of volunteer divers with a passion for keeping the underwater world litter free. Since 2005, the group has carried out over 2000 underwater clean-up dives and been involved in a number of educational and awareness raising projects.



1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report has been produced to provide a progress update on 2019, provide a background to NARC and highlight our work since 2005. The report covers our underwater clean-up events, our efforts in raising awareness of marine litter, other work, and our collaborative future plans. The finance section is included, primarily for our funders but also to demonstrate what can be achieved with modest funding and huge volunteer effort.

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. NARC is a voluntary group of divers and non divers with a passion for keeping the underwater environment litter free. Since its inception in 2005 by local diver Dave Kennard and Keep Wales Tidy, the group has carried out over 1000 underwater clean-ups and a number of awareness raising events. This makes NARC the longest, most active underwater clean-up group in the UK.

NARC 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. 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! Litter type is dependant on the diving location and aim e.g. mainly angling litter at popular angling spots, commercial fishing equipment when working with local fishermen and fly tipped litter where there is easy access to estuarine locations.

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.

1.2 THE BENEFITS

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

Helping to keep the
underwater world
litter free since 2005

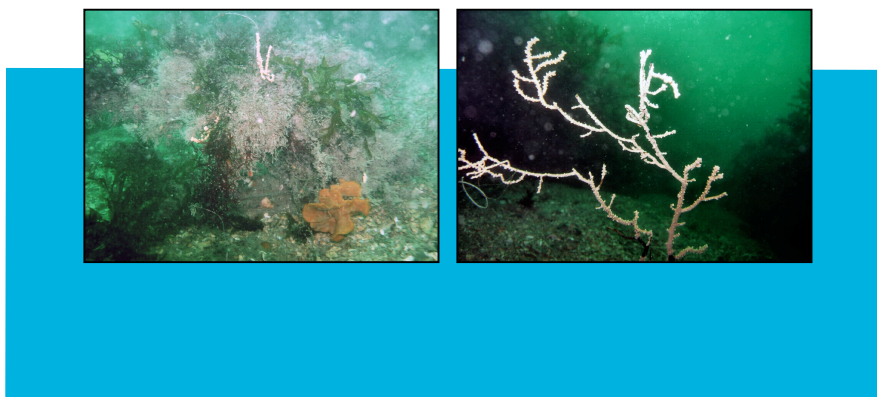


NARC have carried out
over 1000 clean-up
events. We have worked
with angling coaches to
develop tackle tips
leaflets aimed at
reducing tackle loss and
regularly work with local
fishers to locate and
return fishing gear.

- Marine wildlife - less entanglement potential/ decrease in potential ghost fishing from lost commercial fishing gear
- Bathers - less sharp and entangling hazards
- Divers - less entanglement hazards from lost line, ropes, nets
- Leisure craft users - Less chance of entanglement to propellers etc
- Anglers - a reduction in seabed litter decreases the chance of further entanglement
- Commercial fisher - retrieval of lost gear and less impact upon fishery

It is not only the obvious marine wildlife such as seabirds and seals that benefit from less marine litter. 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.

Two of the pictures below show a 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.



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

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

Since its inception NARC has:

- Produced leaflets which are available from most dive centres in Pembrokeshire
- Keeps a project website updated with data, information and news – www.narcdiving.org.uk/
- Given multiple educational talks about marine litter to community groups and schools
- Visited Ireland, to promote the idea to Irish dive clubs
- Visited Greece and Sri Lanka to assist in clean-up dives
- Produced 8 awareness raising videos

- Produced two ground breaking site specific leaflets providing visiting anglers with tackle tips on how to minimise tackle loss and underwater maps
- Assisted the Marine Conservation Society with the “hang on to your tackle campaign” sitting on the working group and providing advice on tackle bin placement
- Linked in with wider initiatives e.g. Ghost Fishing, Plastic Oceans, School projects, World Animal Protection
- Is a working group member of Global Ghost Gear Initiative
- Is a member of a Welsh Government Marine Litter Task Group

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

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.

In 2010 NARC were finalists in the Keep Wales Tidy Awards in the “Long Term Effort” category and in 2012 were chosen as one of 20 National projects to celebrate 20 years of Environment Wales.

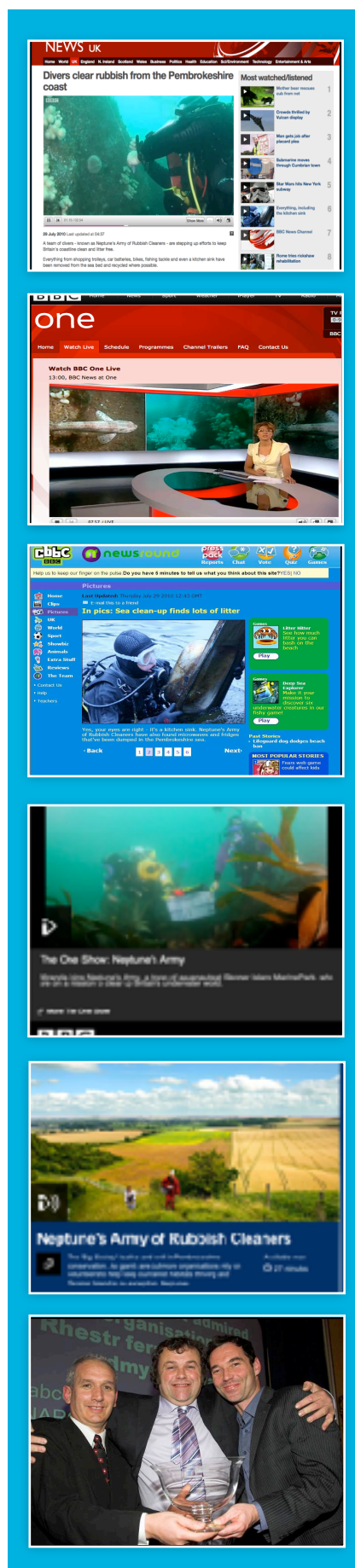
Endorsements of NARC's work from NARC supporters

Sue Burton (Pembrokeshire Special Area of Conservation Officer)

"Not only are the members of NARC 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."

Simon Preddy (KEEP WALES TIDY)

"NARC has 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."

John, Local Fisher

"I have been collaborating with NARC for a number of years now and we have worked together multiple times to help find and recover gear which is helping the environment and our fishery."

Mark, Local Fisher

"NARC have assisted me on a number of occasions and inspired me to look at a number of adaptations to my gear to ensure any impacts from lost gear are minimised."

Chrysanthos Chormpas and George Spyropoulos Loutraki Divers, Greece

"We loved diving with the volunteers from Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners. After seeing so much debris and man-made litter under the sea here in Greece, we knew we had to do something to help. The team from Wales has shared their experience with us and we know this is only the beginning of a great unique partnership."

Fiona Howie, Campaign for National Parks Chief Executive

"We have had some excellent, innovative projects which have shown how working in partnership with others can have a real and lasting positive impact on communities across our National Parks. Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners is tackling an unglamorous and largely unseen but very harmful blight on the littoral fringes of a coastal park."

Kate Lock (Skomer Marine Conservation Zone)

"NARC 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 kills and damages marine life. In the Skomer Marine Conservation Zone we are particularly grateful of the efforts of NARC where the quantities of lost tackle below popular angling sites is of concern."

Gill Bell (Marine Conservation Society)

"NARC 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 underwater clean surveys as part of the M.C.S. Beachwatch weekends"

David Jones, (Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum & NARC Secretary)

"As someone who not only enjoys and appreciates the marine environment in my spare time I'm lucky in that my career involves me in Coastal Management. Marine policy and projects can take a long time to develop, where the outputs and outcomes are often time consuming and difficult. One of the many things I love about volunteering with NARC is that your work is instant, gratifying and really does make a difference. In just one dive you can free entangled wildlife and improve the habitat. I'm really proud of our partnership working, especially with the Welsh Federation of Angling Coaches in producing site specific tackle tips leaflets for anglers."

4. 2019 HIGHLIGHTS



Stack Rocks – May 5

Departed Dale with 12 volunteers to meet up with local fishers, collaborate and locate lost pots.

Stack Rocks 12 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 lobster pot returned to fisher. **Behar** 4 volunteers – 2-3 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 28 metres of rope. **Great Castle Head** 4 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 garden gnome / 1 piece of plastic hose pipe

Stack Rock and Skomer MCZ – May 6

Departed Dale with 9 volunteers and met up with local fishers.

Stack Rock 4 volunteers – 3 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 4m x 2.5m of netting found on reef. **Low**

Point 6 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 182 weights / 50 hooks / 750 metres of monofilament line / 1 can / 1 bottle. Animals released = 1 ling.

Milford Haven Waterway – May 24

NARC were delighted to be joined by World Animal Protection, Fat Face Foundation and Sky Ocean Rescue to cover our work.

Dakotian Wreck 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 5 lobster pots returned to fisher.

Animals released = 8 brown crab / 1 lobster / 1 bull huss. **Soldier Rock** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 lobster pot. **Collier Wreck** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 15m x 3m of netting. **Great Castle Head** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 5 lobster pots.

Animals released = 9 edible crab / 2 lobsters.

Skokholm island and Milford Haven Waterway – June 23

12 volunteers headed out to look for pots reported by local fishers. **Skokholm** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 lobster pot returned to fisher. **N Middleholm** 6 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 lobster pot returned to fisher. **Protheroes** 4 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 green plastic bottle / 1 cardboard box. **Dudley Pole** 6 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 2m long tube / 3 angling weights. **The Collier** 4 volunteers – 3 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 5 prawn pots / 4 lobster pots / 2 boat anchors / 3 pieces of netting / 6m of rope / 2 plastic bottles / 1 tennis ball. Animals released = 1 lobster / 1 pollack.



Skomer MCZ and Milford Haven Waterway – June 24

9 volunteers headed out to look for pots reported by local fishers. **South Mewstone** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 10 lobster pots . Animals released = 4 Lobsters / 6 Brown Crab / 3 Spider Crab. Pots returned to Stevie James. **The Bury** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = Nothing found. **The Behar** 7 volunteers – 3 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 10 lobster pots . Animals released = 6 Lobsters / 5 Brown Crab. Pots returned to Neil Evans. **Behar Reef** 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = Nothing found.

Ramsey Island and Dale Fort – July 23

8 volunteers left to locate lobster pots in Ramsey after reports from local fishers. **Ramsey Island** 6 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 pot / 25m of rope. **Caerbwdy** 4 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = nothing found. **Dale Fort** 8 volunteers – 3 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 750 metres of monofilament line / 54 angling weights / copper piping / 3 plastic slate tiles.

Handmarks and Skomer MCZ – July 24

12 volunteers left to locate lobster pots reported by local fishers. The locations at the Handmarks were provided by Stevie James who was unable to retrieve his pots. The dive confirmed that 2 pots of the fleet were jammed under a rock crevice. At South Haven Pinnacle both marker buoys were missing and 1 was pot jammed in a crevice. All pots were returned to fishers. **Handmarks** 5 volunteers over 2 dives – 4-5 metre viz – dive time of 50 mins = 1 plastic bag / 10 pots recovered. Animals released = 22 Lobsters / 13 Brown Crab / 31 Spider Crab / 1 Sponge Crab / 5 Bull Huss / 12 Velvet Swimming Crab / Animals deceased = 2 Lobsters. **South Haven Pinnacles** 8 volunteers over 2 dives – 3-4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 9 pots recovered. Animals released = Lobsters 51 / Brown Crab 7 / Spider Crab 65 / Ballan Wrasse 6 / Velvet Swimming Crab 1



Low Point – Sept 01

Low Point 7 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 800 metres of monofilament line / 115 angling weights / 106 hooks / 1 rod part .

Hobbs Point – Sept 15

8 divers and 2 shore volunteers gathered at Hobbs Point to take part in the all Wales beach clean weekend. Despite the challenging less than 1m viz divers located a range of marine litter, much of which seems to be fly-tipped. Hobbs Point 8 volunteers – < 1 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 150 metres of monofilament line / 24 angling weights / 4 rod pieces / 2 crab lines / 1 crab net / 1 lobster pot / 2 glass bottles / 2 cans / 1 yacht float / 2 scooters / 1 bike / 1 shopping trolley / 1 car battery / 3 large plastic oil containers / 1 x 4 way extension lead / 1 key ring / 1 car tyre / 1m of copper pipe / 5m of wire cable / 1 pen.

Milford Haven Waterway – Oct 20

10 volunteers left Milford Marina to locate reported pots from local fishers and target Dale Fort for angling gear. Despite the challenging viz divers located a range of marine litter within the Haven. **The Behar** – Location of pots provided by fisher Neil Evans – 9 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 10 pots that had their head buoys missing were recovered. Animals released = Lobsters 4 / Brown Crab 3 / Velvet Swimming Crab 1 / Ballan Wrasse 1. All pots were returned to Fishers. **Dale Fort** 4 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 40 mins = 2000 metres of monofilament line / 171 angling weights / 3 lures / 10 hooks / 1 car tyre . Animals released = 1 dog fish Animals deceased = 1 Conger Eel. **The Caroline** 4 volunteers – 1 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 50 metres of monofilament line / 7 weights / 12 hooks / 1 toilet / 1metre of rope / 1 mug / 2 bottles / 1 metre lead pipe / china pieces. **The Collier** 3 volunteers – 2 metre viz – dive time of 40 mins = Nothing Found.

A Summary of dive activity for 2018

Total volunteer diver days = 102; Total dives = 144; Angling weights recovered = 1025; Metres of monofilament line = 6150; Lobster pots recovered = 74; Shellfish released = 256; Fish released = 15



4.1 OTHER WORK IN 2018

Distributed copies of the site specific tackle tips leaflets which have underwater maps and site specific advice for Stackpole and Skomer MNR

Displayed boards and information at a number of event

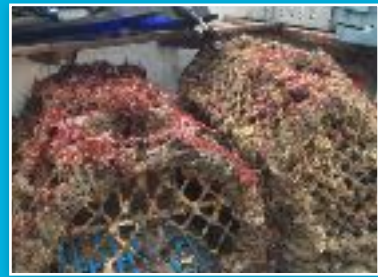
Continue to contribute to the International network on ghost fishing, GGGI and became a working group member to exchange knowledge on worldwide solutions

Minster for the Environment launched NARC video to celebrate World Oceans Day with the video receiving 15,000 views in the first 24 hours

Raised awareness through national media including Sky News, Daily Mail, Independent, Talk Radio, BBC Radio Wales

Increased education work with schools during Eco-schools week and throughout the year

Took part in all Wales Beach Clean



5. PROJECT FINANCES

5.1 Income

Funder	Amount
Balance April 2018 (includes Crown Estate)	£8,574
SHLNG	£400
Folly Farm	£231
World Animal Protection	£3,945
Donations	£751
Total Amount	£13,901

5.2 Expenditure

Service	Amount
Boat Hire	£4,800
Insurance	£500
Publicity and Marketing	£305
Equipment and air fills	£1,444
Total Amount	£7,080
Balance March 2019	£7,373

Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners Trustees 2018. Registered charity number: 1174029

Registered address 4 Richmond Crescent, Haverfordwest, Wales, SA61 1EH

NARC trustees for 2017: David Kennard, (Chairman) / David Jones, (Secretary/Fund Raising) Tony Rees (Retired July 2018) / Ceri Jones, (Safety and Diving Officer) / Meg Pugh (Retired July 2018) / Blaise Bullimore, (Data Officer) / Andy Davies, (Treasurer).

The NARC constitution can be viewed on the website <http://www.narcdiving.org.uk/other-stuff/policies/constitution/> which details how the trustees manage the CIO. Potential trustees can be nominated or self-nominated for a term of 2 years passed by a resolution at a convened trustee meeting.

Annual Report by David Jones

6. PLANS FOR 2019

We hope this report shows our existing sponsors the value of NARC's work and how their contributions are actioned throughout the year.

NARC plans to celebrate its 15th year with a continued programme of clean-up events and to continue our collaboration with local fishermen. There will be an update and reprint of the tackle tips leaflets aimed at being proactive in reducing lost tackle using education.

NARC will continue to be an active member of Global Ghost Gear Initiative exploring solutions for what is a global issue.

NARC will continue to raise awareness of marine litter and its impacts using associated social media platforms.

Clean-up events	Education and awareness	New schemes
10 events booked with more TBC	Reprint angling tackle tips leaflets and new general leaflet	Update awareness raising videos
Funded dives to recover lost commercial fishing gear	Update website with images and video rich improvement	Work with other initiatives around the UK
	Continue to increase social media and communications. Work with schools	ID relevant recycling projects, particularly for monofilament line schools



7. THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The group would like to thank all the sponsors and funders for 2018.

The Crown Estate / Fat Face Foundation / World Animal Protection / South Hook / Folly Farm and the kind donations from the general public.

NARC would also like to thank Brian Dilly, Tim Gosling 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!



