



**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 2020



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 2020, 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 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 2000 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
- Working group member of Global Ghost Gear Initiative
- 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.

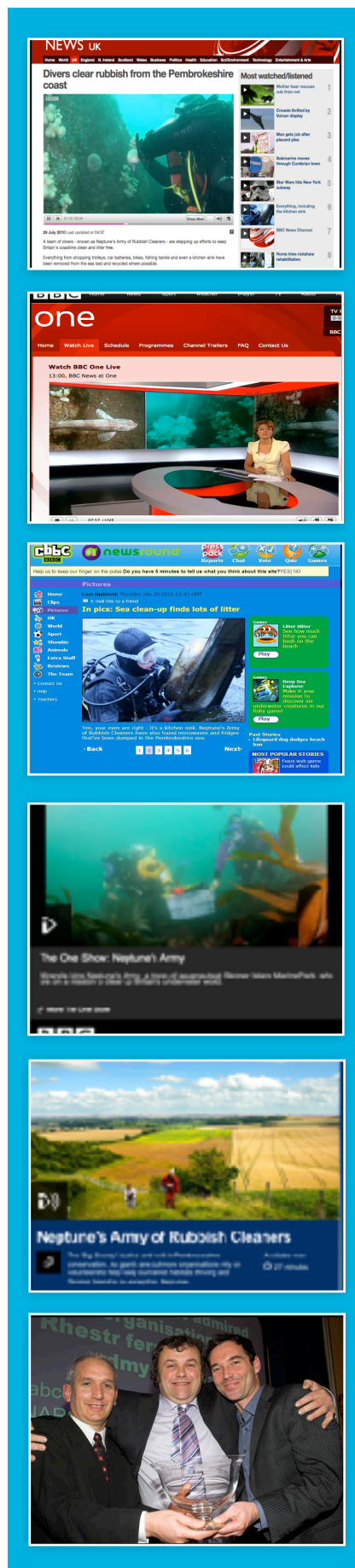
Endorsements of NARC's work from NARC supporters

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. 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Sri Lanka – April

NARC were honoured to be invited to Sri Lanka to carry out a number of clean-up and educational events. It was a fantastic 2 weeks and much warmer than our usual weather at the beginning of the diving year. Please note all volunteers contributed to their own travel costs and NARC funding was not used for the trip.

The 2020 was impacted significantly by COVID19 where only a limited number of dives were carried out. COVID guidance and risk assessments were followed during all clean-up dives.

Stackpole Quay & Milford Haven – August 15

Stackpole Quay – 4 volunteers – 3 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 4m x 2.5m of netting found on reef.

Collier – 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.

Skomer Island Marine Conservation Zone – August 16

Low Point – 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.

Wooltack point – 2 volunteers – 4 metre viz – dive time of 45 mins = 1 lobster pot.

Skokholm island and Milford Haven Waterway – Sept 12

SE 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

Skomer Marine Conservation Zone and Milford Haven Waterway - Sept 13

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.

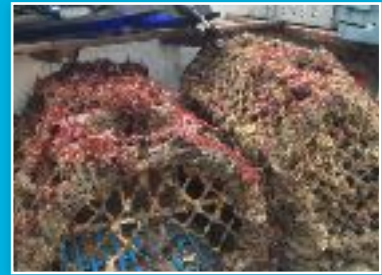


A Summary of dive activity for 2020

Total dives = 10; Angling weights recovered = 248; Metres of monofilament line = 1200; Lobster pots recovered = 15; Shellfish released = 15; Fish released = 4

4.1 OTHER WORK IN 2020

COVID19 had significant impact on NARC plans to attend events and raise awareness of marine litter.



5. PROJECT FINANCES

5.1 Income

Funder	Amount
Balance Jan 2020	£3296
Barti – Du	£1354
Donation	£1240
Folly Farm	£1750
Sea changers	£1000
Picton	£45
Total Amount	£8,686

5.2 Expenditure

Service	Amount
Boat Hire	£1650
Insurance	£547
Publicity and Marketing	£45
Equipment and air fills (Donated HDS)	£0
O2 Kit	£653
Peilicase	£82
Total Amount	£2,978
Balance Jan 2021	£5,708

Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners Trustees 2021. Registered charity number: 1174029

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

NARC trustees for 2021: David Kennard, (Chairman) / David Jones, (Secretary/Fund Raising) / Ceri Jones, (Safety and Diving Officer) / Blaise Bullimore, (Data Officer) / Andy Davies, (Treasurer) / Miles Bettridge / Mari Williams / Mark

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 2021

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 16th 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

7. THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The group would like to thank all the sponsors, funders and members of the public who donated money and support in 2020.

NARC would also like to thank 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!





