



## THE MARINE CAMPAIGN

There are many issues impacting on our seas and it is for this reason that The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside, and The Wildlife Trusts Partnership as a whole are campaigning for their protection.

Consider some of the pressures that face the British Isles' marine environment:

- For hundreds of years our seas have been receiving our waste materials from the land, from ships and from other offshore activities.
- Inter-tidal habitats, like salt-marshes and mud-flats in estuaries and on the open coast, have been claimed from the sea for agriculture and built development.
- Hard coastal defences have been erected to provide protection for increasing urban and tourism development where there were once sand dunes and salt marshes. This leads to further erosion problems.
- Coastal wetlands are now under further threat as rising seas squeeze them out of existence.
- Fish have been overexploited for decades and many stocks, such as cod and whiting, face commercial extinction. Other non-target species are also severely affected through 'by-catch' and damage to the seabed.
- There has been inadequate attention to the development of marine protected areas and the need for measures aimed at species conservation. As a result, the biodiversity of our coastal and marine waters is now seriously jeopardised.
- The United Kingdom's coastline has suffered from more disastrous oil spills than any other European country.
- Eighty percent of marine pollution comes from industry and agriculture, reaching the sea *via* rivers and rainwater run-off.
- Contamination of beaches threatens seafood and public health.

- Rubbish chokes, poisons and strangles marine life. A dead leatherback turtle was recently found to have swallowed more than twenty kilograms of plastic.
- Unable to see the fine nylon fish-netting in their path, thousands of dolphins and porpoises are trapped and drowned.
- Once abundant, the common skate is now commercially extinct in the Irish Sea and almost extinct in other areas.
- Chemicals released in the production of food packaging and electrical goods have been linked to reproductive problems in shellfish and health problems in fish and dolphins.

Through the Marine Campaign, the Wildlife Trusts are campaigning to save our seas and are lobbying for a new integrated, co-ordinated and strategic approach to management of our marine environments.

Not only is the Marine Campaign lobbying decision makers to take this new approach, it is also helping to provide the evidence to support the arguments and to improve knowledge of this amazing environment through a variety of projects. One such project, the Basking Shark Project, involves a full survey of the largest fish in our waters, covering the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, whilst during World Oceans Day and Marine Week, 100's of public awareness events are organised across the United Kingdom.

The Government is currently working on a Marine Bill This could bring in new laws to protect marine habitats and wildlife. Alternatively, it could end up helping marine industries but doing very little to improve protection for wildlife. We need your help to convince Government to do the right thing, to ensure a healthy future for our seas. In particular, we want the Government to introduce Highly Protected Marine Reserves - areas of sea that are fully protected from harmful activities.

Find out more about [The Wildlife Trusts Marine Campaign](#).