

ZERO PLASTIC NEWS

AUTUMN 2019, #2

ZERO PLASTIC

WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES



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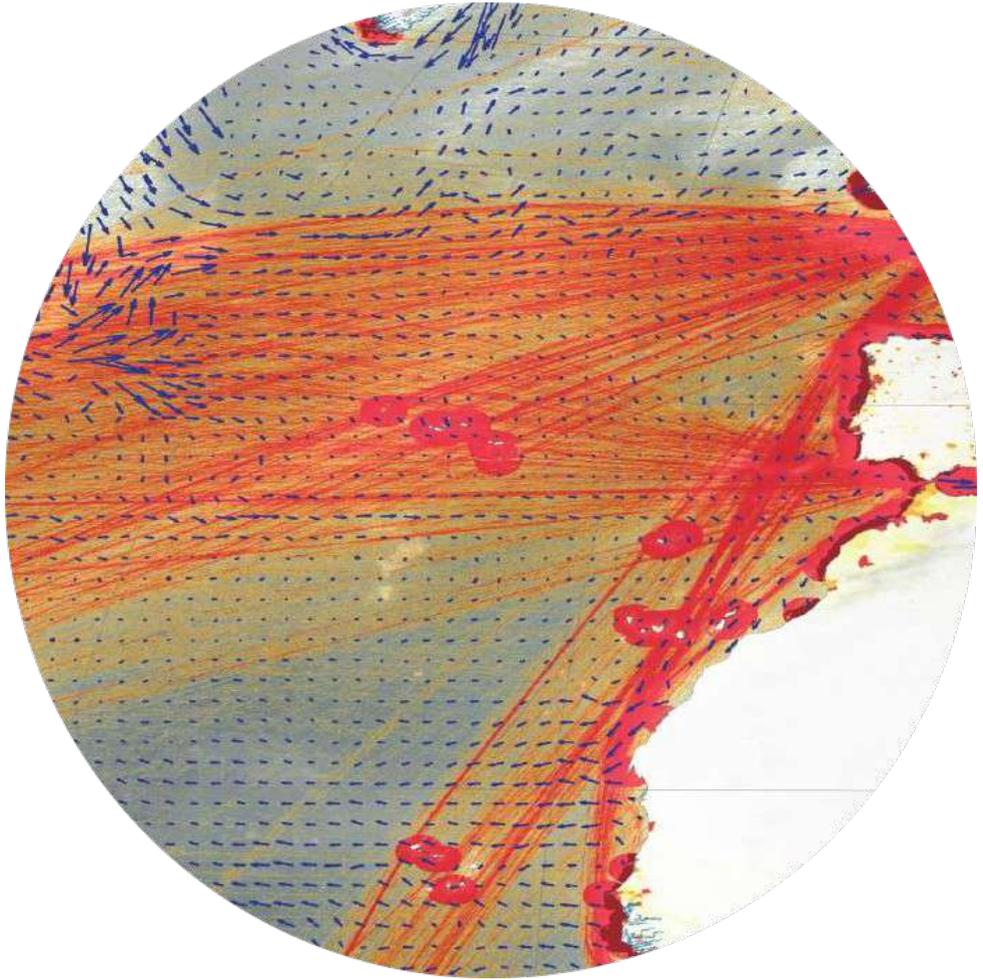
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ZERO PLASTIC NEWS

Summer 2019 in the northern hemisphere has passed; time for Zero Plastic News #2: Autumn edition! Here we share experiences from several Zero Plastic partners, including *A focus on...* Urdaibai and Isle of Man's outcomes from Zero Plastic strategies.

September 2019 brought several important meetings: the WNICBR meeting in Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (South Africa) and the Annual meeting of Spanish BR Managers in Segovia. Both included Zero Plastic themes and relevant proposals; their summaries are included in this issue.

Also in this #2 edition, we open the new *Policy spotlights* section, and we welcome the Islands of Iroise sea Biosphere Reserve to the working group, joining our common effort to keep our five principles rolling:

- Make it simple;
- Take it easy;
- Lead by example;
- Turn off the tap;
- Enough is enough.

The IX Meeting of the WNICBR in South Africa

Under the theme «Coastlines in Balance», the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (South Africa) hosted the IX annual Meeting of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves in September, gathering 30 delegates from 11 nations across the globe. This meeting included a Zero Plastic workshop on Sept. 18th, during which David Carreras (OBSAM-Menorca Biosphere Reserve) presented the working group principles, objectives and updates, and invited new partners to join the group. The workshop provided an overview of initiatives in biosphere reserves to face plastic pollution. Contributions included, for example, the proposal of creating a virtual "waste museum" (Commander Islands), to share data collection methodologies (Fuerteventura), to start working with plastic sources (Gouritz Cluster), to promote bags made with plants (Macchabee/Bel Ombre), and the compilation of best practices within the Network to generate a handbook or white paper of good practices (Great Sandy).

The summary of the session and outcomes from the Meeting, can be found here: <http://meeting.islandbiosphere.org/Contingut.aspx?IdPub=904>



Figure: Zero Plastic session at the IX Meeting. Gourikwa Reserve, South Africa.

Meeting of the Spanish Board of Biosphere Reserve Managers

The annual Spanish Biosphere Reserve Network meeting, held in Segovia-CENEAM 17-18 September 2019, was prepared through months of effort based on hour-long phone conversations with each of the 49 Spanish biosphere reserves (those established as of May 2019). These conversations and the meeting itself reinforced connections between managers and also created new links, leading to consensus as biosphere reserves on several issues, including the crisis of plastic pollution.



During the session in Valsaín, Antonio J. López from Sierra Morena suggested discussing a better system for plastic litter coming from agricultural practices; Irene Estaún from Menorca explained the origin of the Zero Plastic group and the link between WNICBR and Marine Sciences For Society. And Quino Miguélez from Lanzarote with Pedro Castaño from Madrid announced a meeting in Madrid for February or March of 2020, to extend the Zero Plastic group and to begin a new phase of work together.

Contributed by Aquilino Miguélez, Lanzarote BR.



CAPonLITTER "*Capitalising good coastal practices and improving policies to prevent marine litter*"

This new Interreg Europe project involves authorities and organisations from Portugal, Spain, France, Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Germany and the Netherlands. In these territories, coastal tourism is a key economic activity, which is not only highly impacted by marine litter but can also put significant pressure on local infrastructures and may generate large amounts of unmanaged plastic waste. Through this trans-european process of exchange of experiences and mutual learning, CAPonLITTER partners will explore ways to improve their regional policies and promote the implementation of best practices, with the active participation of key local stakeholders.

The Spanish partners are located in the Canary Islands, i.e, the Research Institute ECOAQUA (Univ. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria - ULPGC) as coordinator of the Spanish activities and actions, and the Fuerteventura Biosphere Reserve as an associated project partner and active member of the WNICBR with the objective of reducing the use of plastics.

CAPonLITTER will result in various beaches and coastal areas with zero waste management plans in place, across the partners' regions, including significant improvements in waste prevention, collection and recycling for these coastal sites. In this sense, the main results will be incorporated in the Fuerteventura BR Action Plan and, consequently in the “good practices” database of the Zero Plastic Working Group of the WNICBR.

This European inter-regional process will result in 7 regional Action Plans that will set in motion the lessons learned in two ways: i) initiating the implementation of the practices in the territories concerned through the partners' policy frameworks; and ii) aligning them with regional policies, operational programmes and specific structural funds to finance them. The final outputs will be disseminated through the social media channels of the CAPonLITTER project and other international networks such as the WNICBR.

Contributed by Ricardo Haroun, Gran Canaria BR.

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CAPonLITTER

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"Creando Con Ciencia" in Fuerteventura BR

Creando Con Ciencia is a participatory macro- and microplastic quantification project on the coast of Fuerteventura. Six beaches with different orientations around the island have been designated as fixed sampling stations where we regularly, systematically collect data to identify similarities and differences between macro- and microplastic accumulation due to coastal orientation and other factors. These sampling activities are carried out through open calls to the public, allowing groups of volunteers to collaborate on the project. Additionally, this work has important implications for environmental awareness: volunteers learn the methodology and experience first-hand the problem of plastic on our coasts.



Contributed by Tony Gallardo, Fuerteventura BR.



An initiative to raise public awareness about waste on the coast of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve in the Basque Country, Spain

The production of plastic continues growing exponentially, from less than 2 million tonnes manufactured in 1950 to over 400 million tonnes made annually nowadays. Current global production represents about 40 kg of plastics produced annually for each of the 7 billion humans on the planet. Plastics are entering the seas, and causing significant environmental impacts on marine and coastal populations. Estimates of plastics currently entering the sea each year range from between 4.8 - 12.7 million tons. Plastics are ubiquitous in coastal zones globally, not only in densely populated regions, but also because of currents and long distance transport to remote areas.

Given this evidence, the governing board of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, located in the eastern Bay of Biscay, consider it necessary to raise public awareness about this global environmental problem. Thus the Zero Plastiko Urdaibai initiative was born in coordination with the Zero Plastic Working Group of the WNICBR. Urdaibai BR, as it was declared by UNESCO in 1984, extends over an area of 23,000 hectares of 22 municipalities with the Oka estuary as its axis. This environment includes cliffs, beaches, forests, rivers, marshes and riverside meadows, and several islands.

Zero Plastiko Urdaibai (<https://zeroplastikourdaibai.eus/>) coincided with the celebration of World Oceans Day (June 8, 2019). The purpose of the initiative, backed by more than 3000 people, was to raise awareness about the amount of garbage and plastics polluting the coastline and marine ecosystems. The initiative was led by a group of local divers, Iزارo Sub (<http://www.izarosub.com/>), which has an important social network in the area of the Urdaibai BR.

ZERO PLASTIC NEWS: A FOCUS ON... **URDAIBAI**

The Urdaibai BR Service of the Basque Government, the Council of Bizkaia, and a long list of local companies -even the local soccer club, Athletic Club of Bilbao- lent their support. The initiative resulted in the collection of more than 8 tons of waste from the coast, of which plastics were around 80 percent. Overall it was a great success due to the impressive turnout of participants. The key to achieving this seems to be the fact that the initiative started from a local group with great capacity to mobilize the public, supported by administrations and private companies contributing funds to carry out the event. It is also worth highlighting the high degree of social concern around the issue of plastic pollution. The involvement of the Athletic Club of Bilbao soccer team was also key, since it helped spread the objectives of the initiative to more than 100,000 people.

Our experience demonstrates there is a huge social concern in relation to coastal pollution from garbage and plastic. Both civil society and the business sector responded enthusiastically to joining the aim of achieving a planet free of plastics and working for coexistence among human beings and nature.



Contributed by Manu Monge, Urdaibai BR.



Biosphere Reserve Isle of Man: Single-Use Plastic Reduction

The Manx public are highly engaged with plastic pollution issues, with initiatives such as Beach Buddies, '3 Pieces of Plastic' and the Manx Wildlife Trust's 'Wave Goodbye to Plastic'. Responding to this, the Government published two plastic reduction plans, following the Chief Minister's commitment (2018) to significantly reduce the amount of single-use plastic we use over the course of the current administration, and (2019) recognising a climate change emergency. The first plan was aimed at the Government itself, and the second (July 2019), at the whole community.

Implementation is driven across government through Sustainability Champions in each Department, auditing single-use plastics and meeting to exchange experiences, best practices and support needs. Government banned its own use of single-use plastic straws, cotton buds, cutlery, plates, cups and drinks stirrers (with medical exemptions), first using up stock, to avoid waste. Procurement policy allows good 'value' to include social, sustainability, and environmental values, but more overt advice on plastics is planned to encourage the use of sustainable alternatives. There are now government events requiring stalls to be single-use plastic free. Reusable cups have replaced disposable beer cups at public events, free wet gear bags were removed from our national sports centre, and wedding confetti at the Civil Registry must be biodegradable. Balloon releases are no longer allowed on government land, and alternative suggestions are offered. We are also working towards a more consistent recycling scheme.

ZERO PLASTIC NEWS: A FOCUS ON... ISLE OF MAN

To reduce plastic fragments from food and sewage waste, the government is closing off the last raw sewage outfalls. This prevents a lot of plastic wipes from reaching beaches; these are instead burnt for energy, along with government food waste (waste incineration produces about 10% of our electricity). Consideration is being given to the combination of vegware and anaerobic digestion, but there is currently no facility for this.

Examples of easy ways to remove plastic around the office: removing desk bins; providing jugs and glasses at meetings, removing plastic cups and water stations with plastic bottles, removing milk jiggers, and replacing coffee pod machines with alternatives; offering refillable bottles; and a bring your own mug to work campaign. The final Government Plan deadline is to eliminate all unnecessary single-use plastics across the service and replace them with sustainable alternatives by January 2021.

Challenges include: changing contractor behaviour; large Departments with many buildings to audit; updating building facilities; changing people's habits; and alternatives being more expensive than plastic. Tap water is clean and healthy but bottled water is fashionable. We introduced a Refill scheme (a City to Sea initiative), to reduce single use bottles and littering, and maintain a healthy, hydrated society! An app shows where anyone can refill their water bottle free of charge, at 140 sites that have signed up. Some schools derive considerable income from bottled water, which raises interesting discussions, though tap water is available to students.



ZERO PLASTIC NEWS: A FOCUS ON... ISLE OF MAN

The Community Plan takes the same principles, to ban selected single-use products, significantly reduce the amount of plastic entering our sea, reduce plastic usage to support our emissions target, and work with all areas of the community and economy to identify ways to remove all avoidable single-use plastic packaging.

It will do this by:

reducing plastic consumption through a ban on the sale and distribution of plates, carrier bags, straws (with exemptions), cutlery, polystyrene food containers for immediate use, polystyrene cups, plastic stemmed cotton buds, balloon sticks, oxo-degradable plastics, and rinse-off personal care products with microbeads;

consulting with local businesses on ways to reduce unnecessary plastic packaging from goods;

developing a scheme, with Beach Buddies, to celebrate businesses that substantially reduced single-use plastics;

bringing plastic reduction into judging criteria for competitions;

continuing education and awareness campaigns, including a display panel that has been printed to tour the island;

working with other organisations towards the Surfers Against Sewage 'Plastic Free' Community status;

coordinating with off-island bodies (all our plastic products are imported, so we are subject to changes elsewhere and need coordinated action). The British-Irish Council, (Ministers from the UK, Crown Dependencies and Ireland) have set up a marine litter group, discussing nurdle losses, end of life fishing gear, and education;

reinvigorating our Fishing for Litter scheme, highlighting areas where the fishing industry can help towards the reduction of plastic litter in our marine environment.

We will provide sacks and buckets to fishermen to collect boat and maintenance (eg. net mending) waste and waste found at sea; review port bins for appropriate disposal of waste and end of life gear and addressing public misuse of bins provide education; and engage fishermen with schoolchildren to demonstrate the range of waste items found at sea increasing recycling rates of plastic waste, where viable, auditable waste streams are available, for instance plastic bottles; considering a levy on beverage bottles with <30% recycled plastic content consulting on potential for a bottle return scheme.



Let's Beat Plastic Pollution



Half of plastic manufactured is used just once, despite it being long-lasting and non bio-degradable. We can reduce this unsustainable use of oil and protect marine life from long term litter if we **reduce, remove, redesign, rethink, reuse, recycle and recover** plastics.

80%

of plastic found in oceans, globally, comes from land. In the Isle of Man, most waste plastic that's collected goes to our Energy from Waste Plant or is recycled but carelessly discarded plastic spoils the environment and harms wildlife.

We have eliminated much visible plastic from our beaches in the Isle of Man but microplastics in the ocean, too small to see, still enter the food chain.

Single-use plastic can be found in everyday products such as shampoo, chewing gum and sun cream.

5X

We buy five times the plastic we did 50 years ago and need to reduce our reliance on it to help our environment.

75%

of the 200 tonnes of litter Beach Buddies Isle of Man collects each year is plastic. Yet our marine life is still eating it and getting entangled in it. Much of this plastic is food and drink packaging.

Plastic absorbs and releases chemicals, some of which are harmful to human health and to wildlife.



What you can do:

- Cut out single-use plastics and replace with reusable items.
- Ensure wet wipes and litter aren't flushed down the toilet.
- Take reusable bags when shopping.
- Reuse or recycle as much as possible.
- Reduce packaging or buy in bulk.
- Take all your litter home.
- Secure your rubbish bins against spillage or wildlife.
- Enlist friends and carry out a beach or street clean.
- Support businesses that avoid or reduce single-use plastics.



Links:

- . Single use plastic reduction plans on the Isle of Man <https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/ecosystem-policy-and-energy/plastics/>
- . Plastic Free Communities <https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-communities/>
- . Beach Buddies <http://beachbuddies.net/>
- . Wave Goodbye to Plastic <http://www.manxwt.org.uk/news/2018/03/27/wave-goodbye-plastic>
- . 3 Pieces of Plastic <https://www.facebook.com/3popiom/>
- . Refill Isle of Man
- . Biosphere Isle of Man <https://www.biosphere.im/>
- . City to Sea - Refill app <https://refill.org.uk/>

Contributed by Richard Selman, Isle of Man BR.

The Single-Use Plastics Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/904)

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/904/oj>

The Single-Use Plastics Directive was approved by the European Parliament in June 2019, aiming "to prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, in particular the aquatic environment, and on human health, as well as to promote the transition to a circular economy with innovative and sustainable business models, products and materials". It applies to single-use plastic products, to products made from oxo-degradable plastic and to fishing gear containing plastic. Among others it will impact plastic food-contact materials and articles through a ban on certain single-use plastics, increased collection goals for plastic packaging, extended producer responsibility schemes, design requirements for beverage containers, etc. The Directive "promotes circular approaches that give priority to sustainable and non-toxic re-usable products and re-use systems rather than to single-use products, aiming first and foremost to reduce the quantity of waste generated." EU member states will have two years to implement the directive.

The Balearic Law on Waste

https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2019-5577

The first-ever Law on Waste and Polluted Soils of the Balearic Islands was approved in January 2019, and is the most ambitious regulation for the reduction of plastics in Spain. It establishes a waste reduction target of 10% by 2021 and 20% by 2030 compared to 2010. By 2021, the distribution in the Balearic Islands of single-use plastic products such as bags, cutlery, plates, straws, cotton bud sticks and sweets sticks is prohibited. The sale of products containing microplastics or nanoplastics, and non-rechargeable or non-reusable versions of lighters, razors, and printer toner cartridges has also been prohibited.

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The Zero Plastic Working Group members include the following Biosphere Reserves: Archipelago Sea Area, Blekinge Archipelago, Cat Ba Archipelago, Commander Islands, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, Islands of Iroise sea, Isle of Man, Jeju, Karst and Reka River Basin, La Hotte, Lanzarote, Menorca, Ometepe, Palawan, Península de Guanahacabibes, Terres de l'Ebre and Urdaibai.

If your Biosphere Reserve would like to become involved in the Zero Plastic Working Group, please contact Us at: zero.plastic@islandbiosphere.org

To learn more and watch as We evolve, visit our website: <http://zeroplastic.islandbiosphere.org>

**THAT'S ALL FOR NOW FROM THE
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