

Marine Leisure & Education

August 2022



Contents

1	Summary and Key Points	3
2	Policy	3
2.1	Introduction	3
2.2	Principles.....	3
2.3	References.....	6

1 Summary and Key Points

Increasingly, our coasts and maritime areas are being enjoyed by coastal communities, and local and international tourism. The Green Party believes in the benefits of such activities, including health and economic benefits, but not at the cost of the very marine environment which provides those same benefits. Key actions to ensuring sustainable marine leisure include:

- Expanding education opportunities to communities that further our general understanding of sensitive marine environments
- Providing greater opportunities for schools to develop marine leisure activities and foster respect for our marine heritage
- Promote MARPOL and facilitate its full implementation
- Providing supports to achieve a circular economy
- Creating a marine leisure craft register for vessels with motors of more than 3.5 kW
- Reducing green house gas emissions within the marine leisure industry
- Adopting appropriate regulations for boating activities within Marine Protected Areas
- Support for research into the potential impacts of recreational activities (including angling, adventure sports, ecotours, etc) on the marine environment
- Developing sustainable marine tourism which respects the health of the environment

2 Policy

2.1 Introduction

Interaction with the marine as part of a leisure activity is known to be a positive health benefit for individuals and local communities [1]–[3]. However, we need to ensure that the benefits that we take from this interaction are not at the expense of the marine environment that we enjoy.

There is no obligation on leisure powerboats in Ireland to register [4] and the use of such craft requires no user license or training [5]. There are no limits on the engine size other than for those aged 12 and below [6]. This is unusual in Europe and results in a situation where we have very little information on the use of the boats, the competence of the

users, the emissions generated by them, and the impact from end-of-life boats in the future.

The use of petrol and diesel engines for purely recreational purposes is hard to justify when we are aiming to reduce CO₂ emissions. The Green Party will introduce annual leisure boat registration with the aim of discouraging high powered engines used for leisure purposes and encouraging the take up of less polluting alternatives.

The licensing of leisure boats offers an opportunity to further develop our existing leisure educational framework to include environmental issues.

We aim to raise awareness of MARPOL, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships among leisure users. MARPOL is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. The Green Party seek to ensure that all facilities are provided to assist compliance, including the provision of affordable/free holding tank pump out stations in ports, marinas and harbours and the development of a repair and end of life policy for boats and equipment. In addition, we aim to raise awareness of the significant environmental impact from leisure craft activities including engine noise [7]–[10], anchoring [11] and fishing [12], [13].

There are clear economic benefits of marine tourism and education which are highly valuable to coastal communities [14]–[16]. We must ensure that their development can be done without causing disruption to valuable habitats and ecosystems. While marine laws and protections do exist chronic underfunding of enforcement of these has led to them being ineffectual. Particularly notable by its absence is a designated agency to carry out functions similar to the coastguard bodies in other jurisdictions.

Marine tourism and ecotourism are expanding sectors in the Irish maritime area[14], [16]. It is vital that we learn from other jurisdictions which have seen the expansion of marine ecotours and leisure activities by adopting regulations and adapting them to an Irish context that will provided for the ecologically sustainable, safe development of these sectors [17]–[21].

2.2 Principles

1. Ensure that citizens have access to whole community-based environmental education, which supports and promotes the long-term sustainability of the marine environment through:
 - 1.1. Promoting understanding of marine ecosystems by developing cross curricula, cross-cultural, hands-on models both within and outside of the classroom.
 - 1.2. Reflecting the physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual dimensions of people's interrelationships with the marine environment, at all ages and stages of life.
 - 1.3. Exposing 'greenwashing' in schools and other educational institutions by those sectors which have an exploitative interest in the marine environment.

- 1.4. Inspiring, informing and resourcing the community at large to take positive action for the marine environment.
- 1.5. Work with marine leisure organisations to further develop marine courses for children in the school year.
2. Ensure that tertiary education and research opportunities in marine sciences are promoted, emphasising standards of excellence.
3. Introduce leisure boat registration of mechanically powered boats over 3.5 kW (5HP).
4. Work with leisure and safety organisations to formulate and introduce a policy to reduce emissions by 30% by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2040.
5. Identify and reduce pollution issues associated with marine leisure and tourism and encourage a circular economy encompassing end of life vessels and equipment.
6. Ensure that all facilities are provided to assist compliance with MARPOL including:
 - 6.1. The provision of affordable/free holding tank pump out stations in ports, marinas and harbours
 - 6.2. Development of a repair and end of life policy for boats and equipment.
 - 6.3. A requirement that fuel spill control kits must be kept onboard motor-powered leisure craft at all times
7. Adopt WWF [recommendations](#) for recreational boating in MPA's including:
 - 7.1. Establish environmental monitoring programmes to track ecological and socio-economic impacts along the national coastline
 - 7.2. Define a recreational boating spatial strategy at national coastline level
 - 7.3. Defining a strategic vision for marinas
 - 7.4. Plan ecologically sensitive moorings areas
8. Support ongoing research into potential impacts of recreational activities (including angling, adventure sports, ecotours, etc) on the marine environment in an Irish context. Findings from these studies should be regularly reviewed by the relevant state bodies and translated into public policy, where appropriate.
9. All efforts to develop sustainable tourism models in coastal and marine areas must consider impacts on the environment and have community collaboration at its core from the outset. The Green Party supports such initiatives as the only truly sustainable method of developing tourism in these areas. Marine ecotourism must develop regulations to avoid negatively impacting the marine ecosystems, including habitats and species.

2.3 References

- [1] J. Barton and J. Pretty, "What is the best dose of nature and green exercise for improving mental health- A multi-study analysis," *Environ. Sci. Technol.*, vol. 44, no. 10, pp. 3947–3955, May 2010, doi: 10.1021/ES903183R.
- [2] M. G. Berman, J. Jonides, and S. Kaplan, "The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature," *Psychol. Sci.*, vol. 19, no. 12, pp. 1207–1212, Dec. 2008, doi: 10.1111/J.1467-9280.2008.02225.X.
- [3] K. Dimmock, "The importance of marine leisure environments: Investigating visitor and local resident perceptions and uses of marine environments on Coffs Coast, NSW Australia," *Ann. Leis. Res.*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 243–260, 2012, doi: 10.1080/11745398.2012.719211.
- [4] Government of Ireland, *Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Act 2014*. Government of Ireland, 2014.
- [5] N. Kean, "Island cruise-hopping and Brexit implications - Ocean Focus," *Ocean Focus*, Jun. 22, 2018. <https://oceanfocus.ie/island-cruise-hopping-and-brexit-implications/> (accessed May 06, 2022).
- [6] "Boat licences and safety regulations," *CitizensInformation.ie*, Jan. 11, 2022. https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel_and_recreation/sport_and_leisure/licensing_of_boats_and_watercraft_in_ireland.html (accessed May 06, 2022).
- [7] A. Carreño and J. Lloret, "Environmental impacts of increasing leisure boating activity in Mediterranean coastal waters," *Ocean Coast. Manag.*, vol. 209, p. 105693, Aug. 2021, doi: 10.1016/J.OCECOAMAN.2021.105693.
- [8] A. Carreño, P.-Y. Hardy, E. Sánchez, E. Martínez, Pianté C., and J. Lloret, "Safeguarding Marine Protected Areas in the growing Mediterranean Blue Economy. Recommendations for Leisure Boating. PHAROS4MPAs project.," 2019. Accessed: May 06, 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://pharos4mpas.interreg-med.eu>.
- [9] J. Heiler, S. H. Elwen, H. J. Kriesell, and T. Gridley, "Changes in bottlenose dolphin whistle parameters related to vessel presence, surface behaviour and group composition," *Anim. Behav.*, vol. 117, 2016, doi: 10.1016/j.anbehav.2016.04.014.
- [10] L. J. Holmes, J. McWilliam, M. C. O. Ferrari, and M. I. McCormick, "Juvenile damselfish are affected but desensitize to small motor boat noise," *J. Exp. Mar. Bio. Ecol.*, vol. 494, pp. 63–68, Sep. 2017, doi: 10.1016/J.JEMBE.2017.05.009.
- [11] A. Abadie, P. Lejeune, G. Pergent, and S. Gobert, "From mechanical to chemical impact of anchoring in seagrasses: The premises of anthropogenic patch generation in *Posidonia oceanica* meadows," *Mar. Pollut. Bull.*, vol. 109, no. 1, pp. 61–71, Aug. 2016, doi: 10.1016/J.MARPOLBUL.2016.06.022.
- [12] E. Cole, R. P. Keller, and K. Garbach, "Risk of invasive species spread by recreational boaters remains high despite widespread adoption of conservation behaviors," *J. Environ. Manage.*, vol. 229, pp. 112–119, Jan. 2019, doi: 10.1016/J.JENVMAN.2018.06.078.

- [13] A. Papadopoulos, K. Touloumis, E. Tziolas, D. Boulamatsis, and E. Koutrakis, "Evaluation of Marine Recreational Fisheries and Their Relation to Sustainability of Fisheries Resources in Greece," *Sustainability*, vol. 14, no. 7, p. 3824, Mar. 2022, doi: 10.3390/SU14073824.
- [14] S. Hynes, M. Aymelek, D. Norton, and A. Tsakiridis, "A Survey of Domestic Coastal and Marine Tourism and Leisure Activity in Ireland," 2020. Accessed: May 06, 2022. [Online]. Available: <http://whitakerinstitute.ie/semru-launches-a-new-report-valuing-domestic-coastal-and-marine-tourism-and-leisure-activities-in-the-republic-of-ireland-may-2020/>.
- [15] S. Hynes, D. Norton, and R. Corless, "Investigating societal attitudes towards the marine environment of Ireland," *Mar. Policy*, vol. 47, pp. 57–65, 2014, doi: 10.1016/j.marpol.2014.02.002.
- [16] S. Hynes, M. Aymelek, R. Corless, and N. Evers, "A Survey Of Marine And Coastal Overseas Tourism Activity In Ireland," 2019. Accessed: May 06, 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nuigalway.ie/semru/publications/reports/>.
- [17] C. Kelly *et al.*, "Blue Growth: A Transitions Approach to Developing Sustainable Pathways," *J. Ocean Coast. Econ.*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2021, doi: 10.15351/2373-8456.1143.
- [18] F. Fahy, L. Carr, D. Norton, D. Farrell, R. Corless, and S. Hynes, "Transition Management Pathway for Sustainable Development of Marine and Coastal Tourism Trails," 2021. Accessed: Aug. 11, 2022. [Online]. Available: www.mosesproject.eu.
- [19] B. Garrod and J. C. Wilson, "Nature on the Edge? Marine Ecotourism in Peripheral Coastal Areas," <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669580408667227>, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 95–120, 2010, doi: 10.1080/09669580408667227.
- [20] E. M. P. Madin and D. M. Fenton, "Environmental interpretation in the great barrier reef marine park: An assessment of programme effectiveness," *J. Sustain. Tour.*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 121–137, 2004, doi: 10.1080/09669580408667228.
- [21] B. S. Halpern *et al.*, "A Global Map of Human Impact on Marine Ecosystems," *Science (80-.)*, vol. 319, no. 5865, pp. 948–952, Feb. 2008, doi: 10.1126/science.1149345.