

# Award winning beaches and marinas 2018

## Getting to the award winning beaches and marinas

There is parking at or near all of our award winning beaches, but why not try travelling by bus instead? Those beaches with a bus stop at or close to the entrance have a bus icon next to them. Why not visit [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk) to plan your trip?

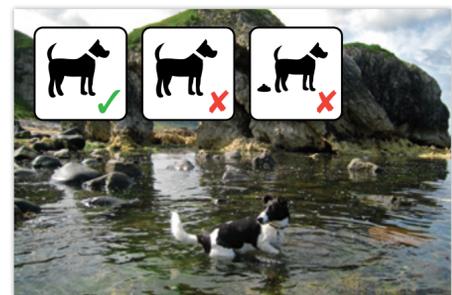
## When the sun goes in there are lots more things to see and do

There's plenty to do around our coasts and lakes even when the sun isn't shining. If coastering, surfing, land yachting, adventure racing, kite surfing, sea kayaking, rowing, deep sea fishing, diving, or rock climbing don't sound like your idea of a relaxing day out, then why not try one of these attractions:

- A** Roe Valley Park, Limavady
- B** Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, Ballintoy
- C** Carnfunnock Country Park, Ballygally
- D** The Gobbins Coastal Path
- E** RSPB Window on Wildlife
- G** Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Holywood
- H** Castle Espie WWT centre, outside Comber
- I** Mount Stewart House and Gardens, Greyabbey
- L** Castle Ward National Trust, Strangford
- J** Seaford Tropical Butterfly House
- K** Murlough Nature Trail Reserve
- L** Tollymore Forest Park, Newcastle
- M** Mourne Maritime Visitor Centre
- N** Kilbroney Forest Park and mountain bike trails
- O** Marble Arch Caves, Belcoo
- P** Castle Archdale, Kesh
- Q** Oxford Island Discovery Centre NNR, Lurgan

## Taking your dog to the beach

Taking your dog to the beach is a great idea, but for the hygiene and comfort of other visitors dogs are not allowed in the award area of a blue flag beach. Outside the award area (and that's still a lot of beach) and at Seaside and Green Coast beaches local rules apply during bathing hours. Please clean up after your dog. Their mess; your responsibility.



### Key to map

- 1** Award winning beach or marina
- A** Things to see and do (see below right)
- T** Tourist Information Centres
- T** Seasonal Tourist Information Centres
- C** Canoe trails
- Causeway Coastal Route
- Mourne Coastal Route
- Sperrins Driving Route
- St. Patrick's Trail
- Dolphins and porpoise
- Dublin Bay prawns
- Maerl beds
- Seabirds
- Seals
- Sharks, orcas and whales
- Shellfish

Learn more about our sealife at [www.ulsterwildlife.org/living-seas/interactive-map](http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/living-seas/interactive-map)

Kilometres 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60  
Miles 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

### Facilities available at award beaches

Fewer, or different, conditions may apply outside the award area, or at peak times.

- Blue Flag beach or marina
- Seaside Award
- Green Coast Award
- Access statement available online
- Beach access chair
- Bicycle parking facilities
- Bus stop
- Cafe
- Changing facilities
- Dogs allowed
- Dogs not allowed
- Dogs on lead
- Family friendly area
- Flotation chair
- Lifeguards
- Parking on beach
- Picnic tables
- Playground
- Public phone
- Public rescue equipment
- Restaurant
- Shops
- Showers
- Showers (paid)
- Toilets
- Tourist information



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**KEEP NORTHERN IRELAND BEAUTIFUL**

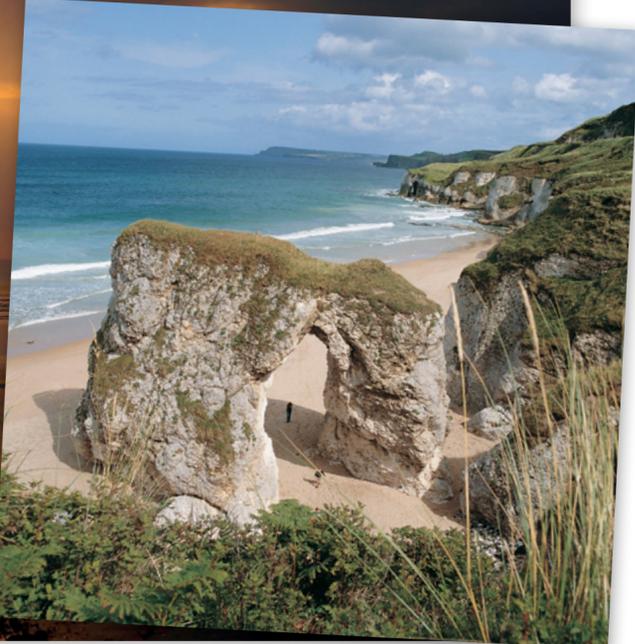
# Our beaches & marinas' award programmes

www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org  www.facebook.com/KeepNorthernIrelandBeautiful  @KeepNIBeautiful

Main picture: Sunset at Casterock Bay by Paul McFarland.

Inset below: strolling sanderling by Wilbert McIlmoyle.

Inset right: Whiterocks.



## Blue Flag Award

A Blue Flag is a symbol of excellence worldwide. In 2017 Blue Flags flew at 4,423 beaches, marinas and boats in 45 countries. Beaches and marinas with a Blue Flag are demonstrating their commitment to sustainability. Every year Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful carry out control visits to ensure each site is fulfilling strict criteria based on water quality, environmental management, education, safety and access. The Blue Flag programme is operated under the Foundation for Environmental Education and every year each awarded beach and marina must provide special activities and events to help visitors understand the importance of our marine environment and how we can look after it. The Blue Flag can only be flown if all the criteria are met.

## Want to drive onto the beach?

Some beaches allow cars to park on the sand because there is not enough parking nearby. At Award winning beaches cars are never allowed into the Award area, which is marked with flags and bunting. On busy days a Beach Supervisor will direct you to a safe area to park (the tide comes in surprisingly quickly!). Please take care both in and out of the car, and remember that the beach is a public place, subject to all the normal traffic laws. The PSNI check speed and regularly patrol on busy days.

## What about Seaside Awards?

This Award is the national standard for beaches across the UK. The flag ensures visitors are guaranteed to find a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal environment with varied levels of facilities provided depending on the location of the beach. Seaside Award beaches are likely to have facilities such as toilets and parking.

## ...and Green Coast Awards?

This Award recognises beaches where the local community has made a commitment to protecting and promoting the environment rather than developing visitor infrastructure. As such this Award aims to recognise more rural, natural beaches that retain their unspoilt character.

A combination of beautiful, unspoilt beaches, careful management and community engagement must be a winner! Coca-Cola HBC kindly supports the Clean Coast Programme.



## Live Here Love Here? Visit here love here....

Marine litter has become a huge problem on beaches and waterways around the globe. If you come across litter please pick it up and put it in an appropriate bin, or better yet, bring it home for some recycling! If you're coming to the beach for a picnic, make sure you take everything home or dispose of it responsibly. Leave only footprints, take only photos.

## Volunteerism!

It's the new thing! Why not take part in a clean up during your visit to the beach. Volunteering is extremely rewarding and a brilliant way to meet new people and enjoy the surroundings. The Clean Coasts programme runs from 1st-10th June with lots of fun events and activities taking place to help clean up our coastline. Visit [www.livehereandlovehere.org/whatson](http://www.livehereandlovehere.org/whatson) to find an event at your chosen beach.



## Photography Competition

Would you like to see a photo of your trip to the beach in print? Entries to our Clean Coast photography competition are used to help create this leaflet. The competition opens in September, so get snapping and visit [www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org) or search 'Clean Coasts NI' for more information or to enter.

## Safe bathing and water quality

All of our award winning beaches are identified as bathing waters by DAERA. Between May and September, DAERA monitors bathing water at 23 sites across Northern Ireland. The sites are monitored weekly and water is classified into one of four categories - 'excellent', 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'temporary advice issued against bathing'.

Get up to date information about bathing water quality from the NI Direct website [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/bathing-water-quality](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/bathing-water-quality)



Symbols like these show water quality at the beach.

## Wildlife and scenery

Northern Ireland's coastline has some iconic sights, and many of our awarded beaches include or are next to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or specially protected habitats. You can enjoy guided walkways through dunes, woodland and scrubland. Keep your eye out for butterflies, birds and insects. Look out to sea and you might be lucky enough to spot basking sharks, dolphins, porpoises and a variety of coastal and marine birds feeding on marine invertebrates and fish. Rock pools are an excellent spot to find marine critters! Starfish, anemones, sea snails and slugs.... they are all waiting to be discovered, but you have to be careful or you'll scare them away! Check out [www.ulsterwildlife.org/living-seas/interactive-map](http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/living-seas/interactive-map) for more information.



Bottlenose dolphin in winter light. Red Bay, Co. Antrim by Gary Burrows.

## List of events

For more information:  
[www.walkni.com](http://www.walkni.com) [www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on](http://www.ulsterwildlife.org/whats-on)  
[www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com)

Events taking place this summer across Northern Ireland. See local websites for more details.

### Mid Ulster

[www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org)

- AUG 1** National Play Day
- AUG 11** Lough Neagh Triathlon
- AUG 17-18** Lumarina Festival Ballyronan

**Butterfly Safari**  
Portstewart Strand  
July 14th - August 11th.



### National Trust

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

- JUNE 10** World of Moths Murlough Beach
- JUNE 16** Orchid Walk Portstewart Strand
- JULY-AUG 14-11** Butterfly Safari Portstewart Strand
- JULY 15** Chris Packham's Bioblitz Murlough Beach, from 6pm for 24 hours
- SEPT 15** Murlough Beach MCS Beach Watch

### Jo's Walks

Murlough Nature Reserve, flowers, birds and beach combing - various dates



Orchid Walk Portstewart Strand June 16th.



### Newry, Mourne and Down

[www.newrymournedown.org](http://www.newrymournedown.org)

- JUNE 22-24** Mourne International Walking Festival 2018 Hugh McCanns, Central Promenade
- AUGUST 11** Festival of Flight Newcastle

**Kite Festival**  
Downhill, August 4th



### Causeway Coast and Glens

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

- MAY-JUNE 25-3** Rathlin Sound Maritime Festival Ballycastle
- JUNE-JULY 30-1** Pirates Off Portrush & Heritage Fair Portrush
- JULY 22-28** Portstewart Community Red Sails Festival Portstewart
- AUGUST 4** Kite Festival Downhill
- SEPT 1-2** Air Waves Portrush Northern Ireland International Air Show

### Mid and East Antrim

[www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

- JUNE 2** Wildlife Walk The Gobbins, Islandmagee, 10am-12
- JUNE 6** Swift Walk Wednesday Glenarm Marina, 7-8.30pm
- JUNE 10** Meet the Peregrines Beach Road Nature Reserve, Whitehead 10am-12



Meet the Peregrines Whitehead, June 10th.

### Ards and North Down

[www.visitardsandnorthdown.com](http://www.visitardsandnorthdown.com)

- JUNE 9** Sea Bangor Maritime Festival
- JUNE 9** World Ocean Day Exploris Aquarium
- JUNE-JULY 28-1** Portaferry Sails and Sounds Festival
- JULY 5-8** Bangor Town Regatta
- AUG 18** Groomsport Music and Fireworks Groomsport Harbour

**Crawfordsburn and Helen's Bay Walk and Cultural Trail**  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/crawfordsburn-country-park-helens-bay](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/crawfordsburn-country-park-helens-bay)

## Plan your visit

Nobody wants to go to the beach and find that their carefully planned day out is ruined by something unexpected. We can all do our bit to protect the environment while having a great day out:

- Check the tides and weather forecast at [www.BeachNI.com](http://www.BeachNI.com) before you go to the beach
- Respect – consider how your actions may impact other visitors
- Take your litter home (even cigarette butts) or use the bins provided
- Take only photos – disturbing or touching wildlife and plants can have a devastating impact
- Always extinguish your BBQ and place it in the bin when it's COOLED
- Scoop the Poop! – always keep pets under control and observe control orders



Photo by Deborah Butler from Super Busy Mum [www.superbusymum.net](http://www.superbusymum.net).

## Action and adventure on the water

Our Award winning beaches are the perfect place for a lazy day by the sea. But if you fancy a bit more excitement then why not have a go at one of the many activities based around them? You could try surfing on the North Coast, or see the country from water level by canoeing Strangford Lough? If you want to try a new water sport this summer check out [www.getwetni.com](http://www.getwetni.com). Maybe you prefer staying dry and walking the coastal paths of North Antrim or Dundrum and drinking in the scenery sounds more like it. You can find a trove of things to try at [www.outdoorrecreationni.com](http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com). If all that sounds a bit too energetic, there are plenty of opportunities to have an ice cream and watch other people at the many events and experiences throughout the summer. There are lots of ways to experience Northern Ireland's coast at [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com)

Find out more at [www.beachni.com](http://www.beachni.com)

**LIVE HERE LOVE HERE**

www.livehereandlovehere.org  
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We can all do one small thing

We can Do One Small Thing to keep our beaches and marinas clean! Let's all make a difference and show that we Live Here and Love Here by cleaning up together.

positive changes to where we live and play. Live Here Love Here is a positive, people powered campaign which supports local volunteering initiatives and provides Small Grants.

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