



SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Studying the Shifting Sands Between Newcastle and Dundrum, County Down

THEME:

Environment—Manage Marine Protected Areas & Species

FUNDING (ERDF + Match):

€5,990,387.56

MATCH FUNDERS:

Dept of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs NI and The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

LEAD PARTNER:

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

PROJECT PARTNERS:

BirdWatch Ireland; Marine Scotland Science (MSS); Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS); NatureScot; Ulster University; and University College Cork

Start Date: 01/01/2018

End Date: 30/09/2022



www.mpa-management.eu



@MarPAMM_project

MarPAMM (Marine Protected Area Management and Monitoring Project) brings together 46 experts and a host of stakeholders from across Northern Ireland, western Scotland and the border counties of Ireland to develop tools for managing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within the INTERREG VA Programme region.

Beaches are particularly dynamic environments, formed by tides and currents, weather and climate. The shifting sands between Newcastle and Dundrum in County Down are caused by rapid beach change. We therefore need to understand such changes to protect our MPAs effectively for the future.

In April 2019, a team of MarPAMM scientists from Ulster University, working closely with the National Trust, began conducting regular surveys of the beach and dune system to find out how, and why, our coastline changes.

"We are exploring how the sandy beaches around Newcastle will respond to increased storm events in the future to help the community plan ahead."

Professor Derek Jackson, Ulster University

Newcastle's disappearing sand is well-known and is one of the most obvious examples of long-shore drift. The once ample golden sands that helped establish Newcastle as a tourism destination have migrated south over the past fifty years, leaving today's tourists to stroll along a promenade dominated by rocky outcrops.

Coastal scientists have been carrying out monthly inspections along the stretch of shore from Keel Point, running south towards to the beach below Royal County Down Golf Course, and more recently, installed a camera within the nature reserve, providing daily recordings of beach changes. They also undertook historical research, using evidence including photographs to plot past changes. Both historical and survey results inform a computer model to predict changes in the future under a range of scenarios.

"These dunes have been here for 6,000 years and our aim is to ensure they are here for many generations, if not centuries, to come."

Melina Quinn, Nature Conservation Advisor, The National Trust