

# PRESTONPANS BEACHWATCH VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

*More than just a clean-up*

## **Introduction to Beachwatch**

- The Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) Beachwatch survey and beach clean-up is a national event that has taken place every September since 1993, with help from MCS members, supporters and the general public.
- Prestonpans beach will not only be cleaned of unsightly or even dangerous rubbish, but the record you make of the items collected will be used in MCS campaigns to stop the littering of the oceans. The results of your beach clean will be published in the following Spring. Since 1993, the Beachwatch Report has been instrumental in focusing the attention of Government, industry and the public on their responsibility to keep the seas and beaches clear of litter.
- Beachwatch is part of the MCS Campaign for Clean Seas, sponsored by the Crown Estate. As a substantial owner of marine land, sponsorship of the Campaign for Clean Seas is part of the Crown Estate's commitment to the good stewardship of land in its care.
- Beachwatch is the flagship event of the MCS Adopt-a-Beach scheme, which encourages volunteers to survey and clean up beach litter four times a year, and use the results to tackle local sources of litter.

## **Safety First!**

Your safety is the main concern, so on the day please follow any safety instructions given at the briefing before the survey and observe the following:

- Gloves must be worn by all volunteers whilst collecting litter. Also bring sturdy footwear, waterproofs, suntan lotion, plus food and drink.
- First-aid kit and Emergency phone – make sure your organiser lets you know where you can find these. Remember that in an emergency, the Coastguard can be contacted by dialling 999.
- Don't touch any containers or drums that may contain hazardous substances, or any unfamiliar objects – notify your organiser
- Sharp objects, such as syringes and broken glass, must be handled with extreme care and placed in suitable rigid containers – not in rubbish bags
- Be careful of slippery rocks, mud flats and other potential hazards, such as lifting items, which are too heavy for you.

- Avoid disturbing wild animals – any injured, stranded or dead animals should be reported to the organiser
- Young volunteers (under 17) must be accompanied by an adult at all times and have a signed Parental Consent Form.
- Tides – your organiser should have details of the time times. Keep an eye on the water level – don't get cut off.

### **Beachwatch survey guidelines**

**All volunteers should observe the guidelines below to prevent your valuable efforts being wasted by collecting data that MCS is unable to use in the Beachwatch report:**

- Contact your local organiser before the day to find out how to get to the beach, where to meet and what time you should be there.
- On the day, your organiser should provide you with a clipboard, a pencil and a rubber, bin bags, gloves and Data Sheets. Check with your organiser in advance to see if they need you to bring any particular items on the day.
- The survey – your organiser will let you know which part of the beach you are to survey and give you a full briefing of survey methods.
- Every item of litter within the survey area should be removed and recorded. It is more important that a small area of beach is surveyed well, than a large stretch half-heartedly and, as a result, inaccurately.
- Natural debris such as seaweed and driftwood **MUST** be left on the beach, as this forms important habitats for wildlife.
- Clean areas – if, on arrival at the beach, the area you planned to survey is very clean, please survey this even if you move on to a different stretch of the same beach afterwards.
- Tally count – items should be counted in fives (i.e. **HHH**). Please record the total in the right-hand column (See the Data Sheet). Be sure to fill in an actual number – words such as 'lots' or 'many' cannot be used for data analysis.
- Litter identification – you may have a problem identifying every piece of litter you find. To aid you, descriptions of commonly found items are given in the Litter Identification Guide.

- Foreign or traceable litter – please note any litter obviously originating from abroad on a separate piece of paper. Give details of any litter items that are directly traceable to an individual or company responsible for the pollution.
- Unusual items – still include these in the relevant category on the Data Sheet, but on a separate sheet of paper note anything particularly unusual you find.
- Stranded, entangled or dead animals – make a note of what you find, and notify the organiser for details of who to contact.
- Other pollutants – note the presence of oil or tar on the Data Sheet, and any other pollutants on a separate piece of paper. Inform your organiser.
- Data Sheets – please remember to write your name and the beach name at the top of each Data Sheet. At the end of the survey give all Data Sheets, and any additional sheets of paper you have used, to your organiser, who will then complete the Survey Form and return the data to MCS for analysis.

### **Sponsorship**

- Getting sponsored – your Beachwatch event is a good way of raising funds for MCS. By getting sponsorship from family, friends and local businesses you will be helping MCS continue their conservation work to protect the marine environment and its wildlife.
- Sponsorship Form – please use the official Sponsorship Form.
- After the Beachwatch event – please make sure that all sponsorship money and forms are given either to your organiser, or sent directly to the Marine Conservation Society head office at the address below, as soon as possible. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to ‘MCS’.

Marine Conservation Society  
 Unit 3, Wolf Business Park, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5NB  
 Tel: 01989 567807  
 Fax: 01989 567815  
 Email: [Beachwatch@mcsuk.org](mailto:Beachwatch@mcsuk.org)  
[www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)  
[www.adoptabeach.org.uk](http://www.adoptabeach.org.uk)

### **Finally...A Great Big Thank You for participating in the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch campaign!**

Your efforts really are appreciated – the results collected by Beachwatch volunteers are analysed by MCS and published in the Beachwatch Report in the following Spring. The data is used by MCS to raise awareness of the impacts of litter, to

campaign at a national level on marine litter issues and to promote measures to reduce litter at source. By participating in Beachwatch, you really are helping to make a difference to your coastline.

To continue making a real difference throughout the year...

You can Adopt-a-Beach and become part of the national scheme to monitor beaches on a more regular basis. For details about the scheme and how to 'adopt' your favourite local beach, please call MCS on 01989 567807, or ask your organiser if they have adopted a beach near you.