

Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership

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Dublin Bay
BIOSPHERE

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Dublin Bay is a UNESCO Biosphere

In 2015, Dublin Bay was awarded Biosphere status by UNESCO. This accolade provides international recognition of the importance of the natural and cultural heritage of Dublin Bay. Dublin Bay Biosphere was launched on June 24th 2015 on North Bull Island by Richard Bruton, Minister for Education and Skills. It is the world's only Biosphere located largely within a capital city.

What is a Biosphere?

Biospheres are internationally recognised for their biodiversity yet also actively managed to promote a balanced

relationship between people and nature. The function of a Biosphere is to promote biodiversity conservation, education, research and sustainable development. The designation brings no new regulations; its aims are achieved by people working together, within the existing national and international legal framework.

Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership

Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership was established to facilitate the functions of the Biosphere designation. It comprises Dublin City Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and Fingal County Councils,



Common seal on North Bull Island (Photo: Clowie Russell)

Dublin Port Company, the National Parks & Wildlife Service of the Departments of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Fáilte Ireland. It works with community groups, NGOs, local businesses, universities and schools.

Quick facts:

- Our purpose: To inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature today
- Dublin Bay is now part of a global network of 669 UNESCO Biospheres in 120 countries
- UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation

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Biosphere Discovery Tours

In 2016, Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership worked with Dublin Bay Cruises and the Summer of Heritage Programme to offer Biosphere Discovery Tours. This ecotourism initiative enables people to see Dublin Bay's fascinating wildlife firsthand. Our

specially trained guides gave tours to over 11,000 people. Seabirds, seals and porpoises were regularly seen and 72% of passengers surveyed rated their tour as ten out of ten. A new three year programme, including school tours, begins on April 26th 2017.



Comhairle na nÓg video encourages young people to embrace nature in Dublin Bay



"We are so lucky to have this on our doorstep" - Comhairle na nÓg member

Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership worked with Dublin City Comhairle na nÓg to co-create an awareness campaign for the Biosphere. Nineteen members (aged from 12 to 17) volunteered to get involved.

They chose to make a short innovative video, aimed at young people, to celebrate Dublin Bay and tell the story of the Biosphere in their own words and were given full creative control. The members had talks and guided

walks to experience nature in Dublin Bay for themselves. They wrote the script for the video and it was filmed on-board a Dublin Bay Cruise from the City Centre to Dun Laoghaire and Howth, with spectacular drone footage from North Bull Island.

The video was launched on July 12th by Lord Mayor Brendan Carr. It is available online on the Dublin Bay Biosphere Youtube channel and has had almost 2,000 views to date.

This was a pilot project for the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme's Brand & Story Toolkit and is regarded as international best practice for public engagement in Biospheres. It has been showcased at the World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru, at a UK Biosphere Networking Event in Scotland and on News2day, an RTE TV programme for young people. See the video at <http://bit.ly/2g2IJSK>.

Dublin Bay Biosphere Biodiversity Conservation and Research Strategy 2016-2020

A Working Group was established to assist in developing a Biodiversity Conservation and Research Strategy for Dublin Bay Biosphere. This group brings together the member organisations of Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership with individuals and NGOs actively working on ecological research and conservation in

Dublin Bay. The group has met five times and members proposed, discussed and prioritised the actions set out in the Strategy. Following public consultation, the Strategy document is available at <http://bit.ly/2IHKrfY>. The working group meets annually to review implementation of the Strategy. Numerous ac-

tions are underway on sites including Ireland's Eye, Baldoyle Bay, Howth Head, North Bull Island, Dublin Port and Dalkey Island. Also Acclimatize, a University College Dublin-led research project in which Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership is participating, was recently awarded €3.5M in EU Interreg funds.

LATEST NEWS: €3.5M in EU Interreg funding awarded to UCD-led Acclimatize research project on water quality and climate change in Dublin Bay

Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Conference: Connecting People and Nature



Black Guillemot at Dublin Port (Richard Nairn)

The first Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Conference took place at UCD on October 26th. Its theme was "connecting people and nature". It was a great success, attracting a wide audience of over 120 delegates including councillors, community groups, NGOs, local busi-

nesses, academics, ecologists, students and staff of local and national government bodies. Keynote talks came from Prof. Martin Price, Chair of the UK Man and Biosphere Committee, Dr Olivia Crowe of Birdwatch Ireland and Laurie Bennett of Within People, who gave an inspiring presen-

tation on engaging people with nature. Several other speakers highlighted the great work being done locally. There was lively discussion over coffee. The day closed with useful workshops on Communication, Supporting Sustainable Communities and Research Networking.