

# WHY PUT FENCES ON A BEACH?

## A Photo Diary of The Sand Fences Pilot Project



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe  
Galway City Council



**CARO**

Climate Action Regional Office  
Atlantic Seaboard North



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



This report was created by Galway Atlantaquaria.

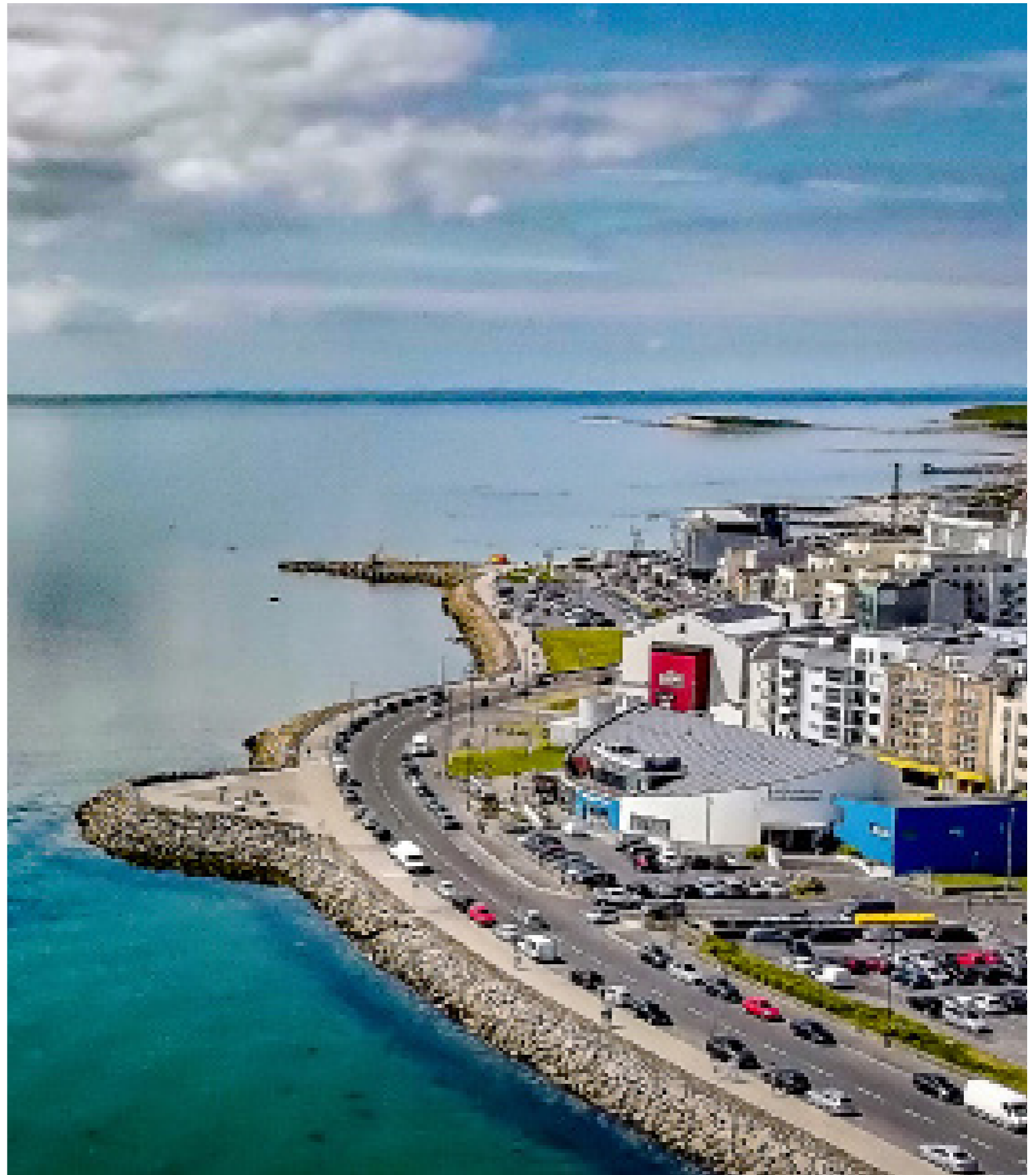
After 20 weeks of surveys here are some of the key themes, or events of the Pilot Project.

**Enjoy**



Check out our YouTube Channel Playlist  
GRATTAN DUNES & Sand Fence Project, 2023  
for a host of videos about the progress of the project.

[www.nationalaquarium.ie](http://www.nationalaquarium.ie)





## **BEFORE Nature Based Solutions (NbS)**

Galway Bay is not immune to the changing Climate, and with the increasing threat of Climate Change, coastal areas need protection from flooding, coastal erosion and property damage.

Storm/Stone Armour became a popular idea, and so areas that were at risk were afforded the 'protection' of large rocks!

However, the ocean does not care for these pebbles, and thus will scatter them and turn into deadly missiles..... we need to think about MITIGATION not FORCE!

## **WHAT IS NbS?**



## **NbS is...**

“Nature-based solutions involve working with nature, as part of nature, to address societal challenges, supporting human well-being and biodiversity locally.

They include the protection, restoration or management of natural and semi-natural ecosystems; the sustainable management of aquatic systems and working lands; and integration of nature in and around our cities.

They are actions that are underpinned biodiversity and designed and implemented in a way that respects the rights, values and knowledges of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.”

**Let's Explore Some NbS Projects like The Sand Fence Pilot Project on Grattan Beach,**



## COMMUNITY INPUT

In early December 2022, Galway City Council & ARUP hosted a series of meetings with local stakeholders to explore the viability of 'A' Project that could be delivered on Grattan Beach, Salthill.

**These meetings included some data on the Community, Benefits and Plans for Grattan.**

**It was decided that the Pilot Sand Fencing would be delivered on Grattan Beach in 2023.**



## A PROJECT BEGINS...

With the leadership of Paula Kearney, Galway City Council, Dr. Kevin Lynch, University of Galway and support from CARO.....

On the 29th June, 2023 **Grattan Beach** finally had its NbS Project in place!



## OKAY? BUT WHY PUT FENCES ON A BEACH?

- To STOP Sand Loss from the Shore
- To Mitigate Coastal Erosion
- To Promote Biodiversity
- To Save Pollinators
- To Promote Community Engagement with recreational play, Citizen Science and Community Beach Cleans



# CES ON GRATTAN BEACH, Salthill

While the Sand Fence Project has some goals like viability, proof of concept etc. there was an added benefit of CES. Cultural Ecosystem Services (CES) are the non-material benefits that humans obtain from ecosystems (MEA, 2005). This means that the dunes offered people a place to just sit, enjoy, and relax the beauty of the shore.



# CES ON GRATTAN BEACH, Salthill



# CES ON GRATTAN BEACH, Salthill



**CARO**  
Grattan Beach Living Lab Sand Dune Fencing Pilot  
Project (Actions co-designed with local communities)

### Sand Dune Restoration in Progress

Please use the path to access the beach

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a trá

Sand dunes protect us from storms, protect our  
beaches, and provide a valuable habitat for  
wildlife.

More - [www.CARO.ie/Projects-Research/Campaigns/Sand-Dune](http://www.CARO.ie/Projects-Research/Campaigns/Sand-Dune)  
June 2023  
Mullbeach 2023



# CES ON GRATTAN BEACH, Salthill



**CES ON GRATTAN BEACH, Salthill**



# CES ON GRATTAN BEACH, Salthill



## WHAT OTHER BENEFITS?

As the Sand Fencing was in its Pilot Stage, there were some other benefits like more Community Engagement in Seashore Experiences for the public to enjoy.



## Community Events

Clean Coasts Beach Cleans, Love Your Beach Week, Rockpooling, Citizen Science Shark & Ray Egg Hunts, Leave No Trace Roadshow, Ocean Literacy events and Sand Castles sculpting, were just some of the events hosted on the shore.







## **DRIFT SEAWEED BENEFITS**

With the newly formed dunes, we also saw the benefits of Drift Seaweed on the shore. The Drift Seaweed both nourished the Flora and Seabirds that visited the area.

Over the last few months we have seen a whole host of new and rare birds visit Grattan Beach thanks to the dunes and Drift Seaweed working together.

(Note, The Drift Seaweed can impact on the public access to the shore. We are hoping to explore some ideas in 2024 to change this).

[Did you know that Drift Seaweed can absorb the energy of the incoming waves.](#)



# MITIGATION NOT FORCE

The dunes faced three deadly storms this year, and while they did 'Bend' and deflect the power of the sea, it was Storm DEBI that won in the end.

While this had disappointing impact on the people who worked hard on the development of the concept, it did not reflect on the overall success of the project.

The roots of success have already been planted.



Grattan Beach is very unique, it encompasses all of the elements for Ocean Literacy Awareness.

It has the Connection sites, Biodiversity Areas, and Plentiful Drift Seaweed for 'Living Lab' Learning and Marine Education.



***On The 18th of Nov, 2023 the Dune Fencing was removed, but with your support we can reimagine the fences return in 2024.***





What could Grattan  
Beach look like in 2024?



Sand Fencing Project, Supported by Galway City Council, CARO, and University of Galway. | Public and Community Engagement by Galway Atlantaquaria & I Like Beaches, Galway.



**Both Galway City Council & The University of Galway have not been sitting on the 'fence', and will have some updates on the design of the project in 2024.....**



**Would you like to learn more? Or Become a Friend of Grattan Beach?**

Please LIKE our Facebook Page for more updates on the fencing, activities and Biodiversity on Grattan Beach, Salthill.

**See:** <https://www.facebook.com/ILikeBeachesGalway>



 Galway   
Atlantaquaria® 

Photos and Video of Sand Dunes kindly provided by Galway Atlantaquaria.