



EXPLORE YOUR SHORE
May 8, 2025

Grattan Beach, Salthill

How did we get on in May?

Our March Explore Your Shore (1st and 8th) was a little different. We tried the BIG BEACH BIODIVERSITY Survey.

This is almost the same as EXPLORE YOUR SHORE, but you are allowed to record all biodiversity on the shore.

This means that we recorded a host of bivalves, molts, birds, etc.

We also solved a four year riddle, and finally discovered the 'brown' water at low tide is actually 'Seaweed Spores'.

As always, any experience on the shore is a good days outing and we look forward to the next Explore Your Shore.

It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.
Henry David Thoreau



About Galway Atlantaquaria, and Explore Your Shore

Galway Atlantaquaria, is Ireland's largest native species Aquarium in the heart of Sathill, Galway City.

Our goal is to engage, educate, and inspire people to protect our most vulnerable biodiversity and ecosystems.

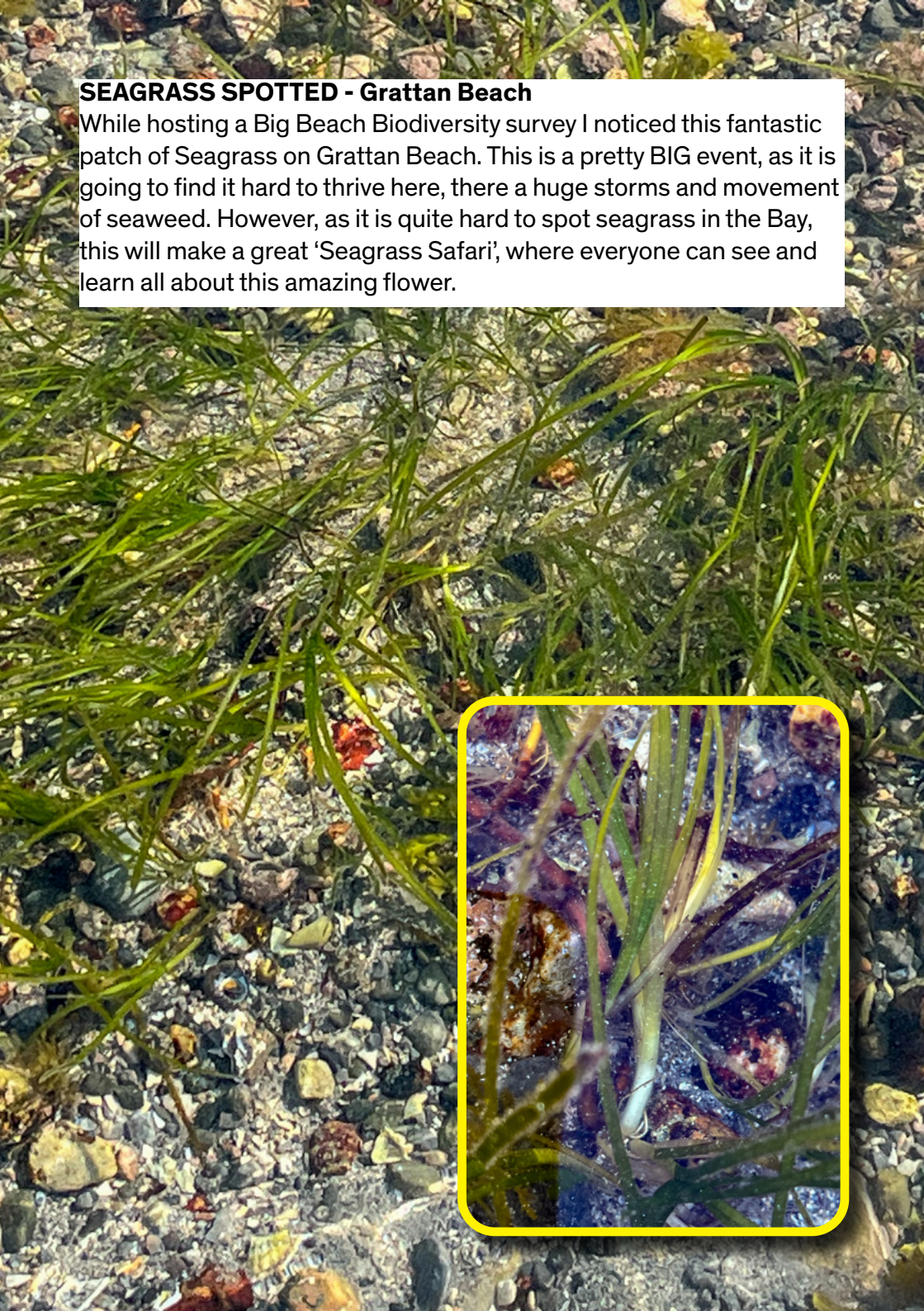
The reason we support Explore Your Shore is to try and record every species that lives in Grattan Beach, so we can track these populations, identify vulnerable species, share high-quality images, share knowledge (and learn from our rockpool community), encourage others to champion Explore Your Shore, and finally have fun.

Exploring The Shore is a huge part of Citizen Science.



SEAGRASS SPOTTED - Grattan Beach

While hosting a Big Beach Biodiversity survey I noticed this fantastic patch of Seagrass on Grattan Beach. This is a pretty BIG event, as it is going to find it hard to thrive here, there a huge storms and movement of seaweed. However, as it is quite hard to spot seagrass in the Bay, this will make a great 'Seagrass Safari', where everyone can see and learn all about this amazing flower.



SEA HARES

There are a lot of Sea Hares (*Aplysia punctata*) on Grattan, and we finally found a clutch of eggcases.



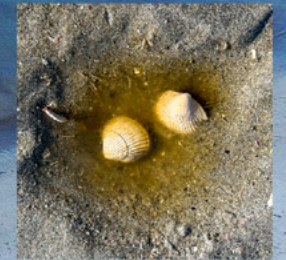
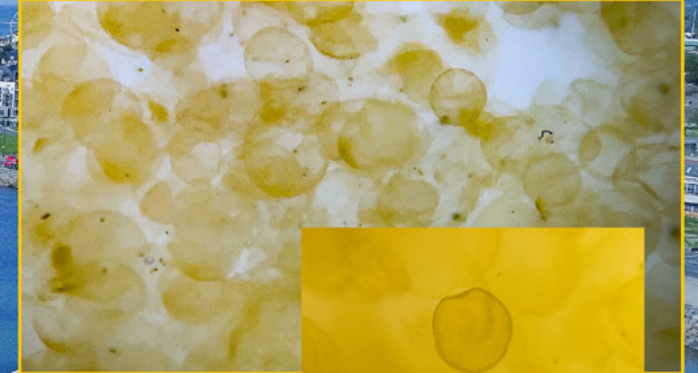
SEAWEED SPORES



Fucus vesiculosus, bladderwrack -

Bladderwrack can release a very high number of spores. One plant may have more than 1000 receptacles, each containing more than 1,000,000 eggs. This means a single bladderwrack plant can produce over a billion spores.

This 'Bloom' was spotted by a drone hovering above Grattan Beach, Salthill.



SEAWEED SPORES

For many years this has been a mystery! Years ago when rockpooling you would notice the 'Brown' sediment, and think its possible pollution. However, a few weeks ago the water was full of these spores, and when you saw them at low tide, they looked similar to what we thought was pollution! It was then a matter of conclusive thought that connected both events. We were able to capture some of the spores, and it became quite clear that this mystery has been solved!

Shell Layers

Shell Layers: Visible

Periostracum:

The outermost organic layer (made of a protein called conchiolin), which protects against erosion and predators.

Prismatic Layer: Visible

Made of tightly packed calcite or aragonite crystals, providing rigidity.

Nacre (Mother-of-Pearl):

The innermost iridescent layer, made of aragonite platelets arranged in a brick-like structure, making the shell strong and resilient.

Chequered carpet shell

(*Ruditapes decussatus*)

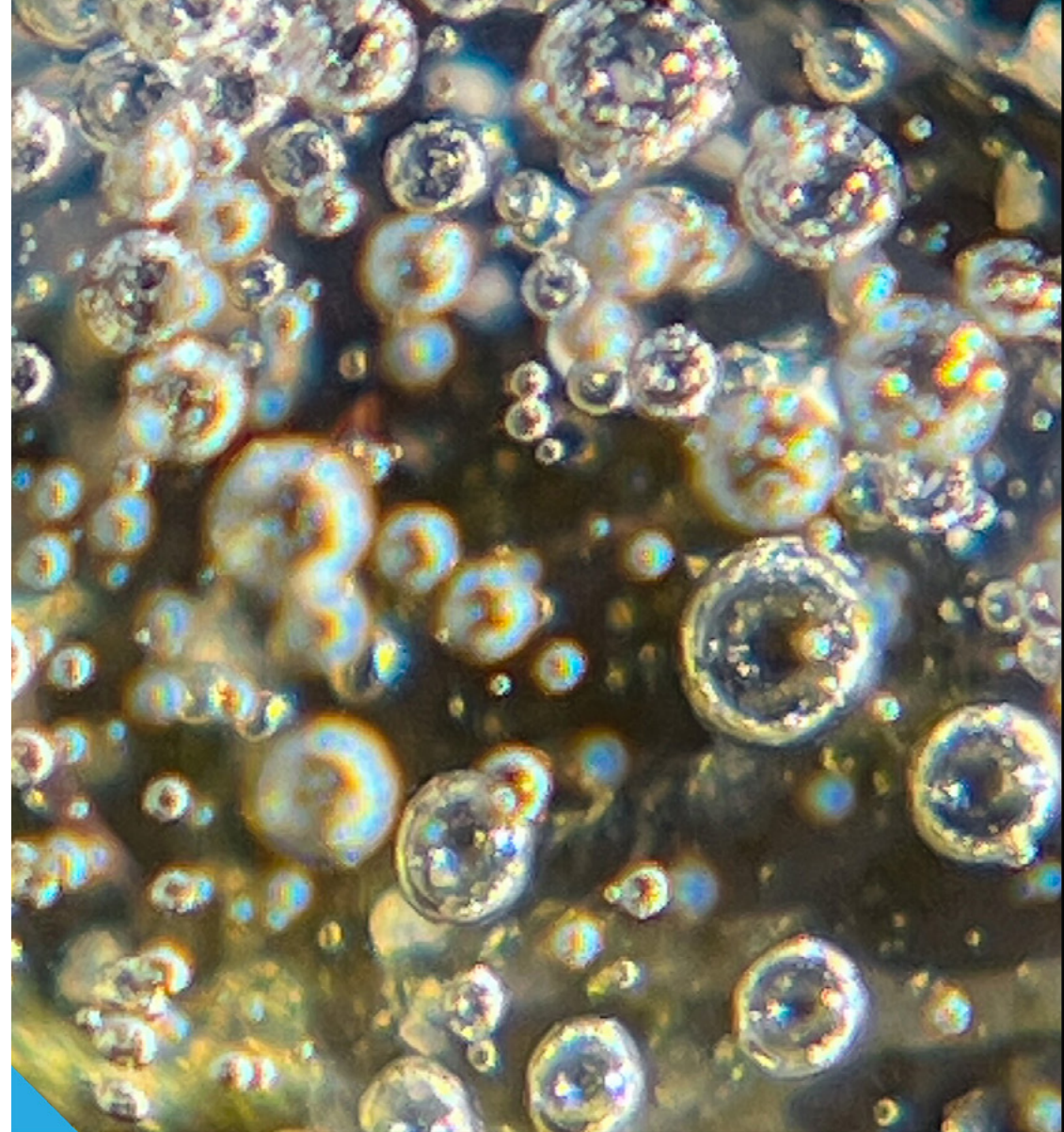


Bivalve Adventures

Thanks to some amazing Explore Your Shore Training with Dave Wall, we are creating a host of infographics, and interesting facts.

You can find out more by seeing;

<https://nationalaquarium.ie/what-are-bivalves/>



We have more video of the Rockpools, and Species on our YouTube Channel, see: [/GalwayAquarium](#)



www.nationalaquarium.ie