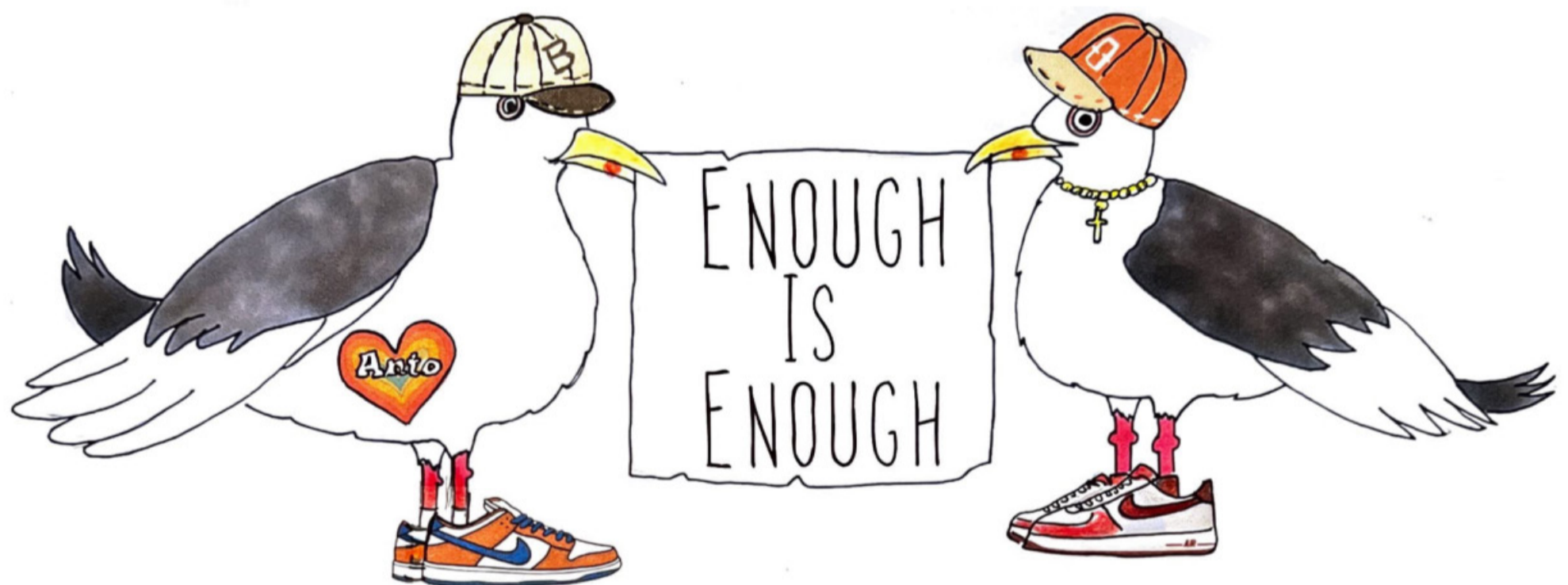


URBAN GULL UPRISING



Today marked an inspiring and truly historic day in the life of urban gulls. Gulls across Ireland have staged an uprising in Dublin, marking the beginning of a fight back for the survival of our species.

While many humans have been caught off guard by the uprising, most gulls have been keenly aware that this day has been coming for some time.

As the impact of human activity has continuously eroded our way of life and threatened our very existence, we had only one option left, and that was to fight for our survival.

As the fog lifted in the early hours of the morning, the normally strong sea breeze at this time of the year died down and made way for a glorious, sunny day. It was as if mother nature was giving us gulls a helping hand on this special day. Within hours, thousands of gulls had descended on

the Dublin Docklands in preparation for a huge rally to signal the uprising.

The gulls travelled from all corners of the country, from Killybegs to Limerick, and from Dingle to Rosslare. A large international delegation was also present with an array of colourful flags and banners from around the world. By the time the first speaker took to the stage, the spirit of revolution was truly in the air. Chants of 'Gulls not Culls' and 'System Change not Climate Change' rang through the Docklands

as the speakers struggled to make their way through the large swaths of cheering crowds to deliver their powerful speeches.

A lively and enthusiastic rebel Cork gull was the first speaker on stage, much to the delight of the large contingent of Cork gulls. A local Dublin gull was given the honour of reading 'The Gull Manifesto' which sets out the gulls' position, the uprising's aims and aspirations and plans for the future. The Manifesto was developed over the last 12 months through various workshops, talks, debates and meetings organised by the uprising organising committee. The organising committee plan to distribute copies of the Manifesto around the country over the next number of weeks.

Messages of support were also read out from other birds and animals across the globe, with many sharing their stories and relaying similar experiences to us.

And as word of the uprising continues to spread, the committee's Communication Officer has reported that messages of support continue to flood in from pigeon carriers traveling from all corners of the world.

The uprising has also received the backing of many humans. A number of speakers at the rally emphasised that, while human activity has been responsible for the current crisis, this is not a battle of humans against gulls. Humans are also experiencing the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises. Further, it was argued, not all

humans are equally responsible for the crisis, with the capitalist class driving the destruction to the detriment of the majority of humans and animals. Gulls share with their human allies the idea that systemic changes – not tweaks around the edges – are needed.

The importance of education and the sharing of information was another key theme raised by speakers at the rally. They spoke of the critical need for more education for humans in order to ensure a change in their current behaviour. However, most speakers concluded that ultimately, humans and gulls need to create healthy ecosystems in which we can all work and live together side by side, as we have done for thousands of years.

International speakers at the rally spoke of the inspiration they have taken from the uprising in Dublin and their desire to bring the spirit of revolution back to their own countries. An impressive and emotionally charged surprise fly-by of international delegates took place at the end of the rally, much to the amazement of the Irish organising committee who, it seemed, had been kept in the dark about the event.

A meeting of both Irish and international delegates took place after the rally, with the clear intention of spreading the ideas from the Manifesto and developing an international movement for change.

We spoke with a number of activists attending the rally to get their views on the historic uprising. Their placards

made clear their demands: 'Habitats for Herring Gulls!', 'Cohabitation – not expulsion!', 'We want fish and roses too!' 'It's hypocrisy from this government' a Herring Gull from Balbriggan, told us. 'First, they allow our food stock and our habitats to be destroyed, and then they permit the demolition of our sites of refuge – where else can we go?'

'Overfishing has driven gulls inland,' said a young Common Gull who flew to Dublin from Cork city to support the rally. 'To exploit our seas for profit, the industrial fisheries have depleted our food stocks. When we move inland in search of food and nesting sites we are treated as pests.'

'We see large fishing companies making a profit, and the ecosystem on which that depends is just forgotten about. The livelihoods of gulls and our seabird comrades have become one more externality of rampant capitalism. We need to defend ourselves.'

Activists are organising against what they have termed the 'fishery-industrial complex.' 'This affects more than just us gulls,' said the Corkonian. 'This is a call to our allies, both bird and animal, to assert our collective power and take control.'

'We are fighting not only for ourselves but also on behalf of the natural world and for the coexistence of all species. We are calling on our seabird brethren, on environmentalists, on workers in fishing communities affected by the depletion of fish stocks and on anyone who is sick and tired of the crimes of this exploitative system to join us in our fight for eco-social justice.'

The final speaker, a local gull from the 'Mothers for Change Group', rounded up the rally with fighting words: 'We will take our fight to every city, town and coastal community until our demands are met. We will not rest until we win dignity and self-determination for all birds, and no less than our fair share of the natural gifts of this land.'

To raucous cheering and wing-beating from the assembled gulls and humans, she concluded, 'In the words of the great champion of the oppressed James Connolly, "Our demands most moderate are: We only want the earth."

Never miss an issue of The Left-Wing Journal

Six-month subscription

Name: _____

Address: _____

I would like to receive a monthly copy of The Left-Wing Journal.
The paper will be sent directly by pigeon courier.

Please note, bad weather may affect delivery times.

Seabirds in Hot Water

Many of us gulls, along with other bird species would not be alive today except for the extraordinary work done by BirdWatch Ireland in protecting wild birds and their habitat in Ireland. We invited Brian Burke from BirdWatch Ireland to contribute an article to our journal on the impact on climate change on birds.

The island of Ireland supports around a million breeding seabirds every summer. Together with those around the coasts of Britain, we have around a quarter of Europe's breeding seabirds. Whether you're a dedicated birdwatcher, a casual fan of nature and wildlife, or the most hard-hearted cynic, you have to appreciate the value of seabirds as ecosystem indicators. If the seabirds are doing well, then you can sleep soundly at night knowing that all is well below the water and we can keep relying on the seas and oceans to provide us with food, jobs and recreation as well as nutrient cycling and regulation of weather, amongst a multitude of other valuable services that underpin our economy but don't fit neatly on a balance sheet.

Conversely though, if the seabirds aren't doing well, then we have to take notice. They're the canary in the coalmine of the planet's most important ecosystem. Right now, seabirds of all shapes and sizes across the world are telling us that climate change is already having profound and far-reaching impacts, and the worst is yet to come.

There are a lot of ways that climate change directly impacts seabirds. It won't have escaped anyone's attention that we are experiencing more and more extreme weather events each and every year. Record-breaking heatwaves and 'once in a lifetime' storms are almost expected from year to year. If these hit during key parts of

the breeding season, then weeks and months of parental investment by adult seabirds can be wiped out in a matter of days – hundreds of nests washed off beaches in one high tide, small, fluffy chicks struggling to retain heat during heavy rain, or unable to cope with extreme heat for days on end.

This weather also inhibits the adults' ability to find food, whether it's wet and windy where they can't see into the water, or flat, calm and roasting hot when the fish move from the surface to colder depths. In my own experience, heavy rain can turn a thriving seabird colony into something more akin to a warzone overnight, and some of the sunniest and most beautiful summers have corresponded to some of the worst years for Common and Roseate Tern chicks in the Irish Sea.

Most seabirds live a long time and so they have many chances to raise chicks successfully to form the next generation – terns and gulls can live to their twenties and thirties, and petrels, shearwaters and gannets into their 40s and 50s and older. Extreme weather events, whether they're at the breeding colonies in summer or out in the mid-Atlantic in winter, all make life tougher for even the most experienced birds and reduce their chances of survival, meaning fewer birds back at colonies to take advantage of those 'good' years if and when they come.

And then there are the indirect effects, where climate change is affecting the physiology, abundance and distribution of prey species, which can manifest in sudden, huge declines in seabirds. Increased sea-surface temperatures as a result of climate change causes a decrease in salinity and an increase in acidity, which impacts plankton (as well as corals and shellfish). In 2014, tens of thousands of Cassin's Auklets washed up on the Pacific coast of North America having starved to death. They feed on animal plankton, but a

heatwave that year meant the water was hotter and stayed warmer for longer than any time since records began, which meant no zooplankton, which meant no Cassin's Auklets. In 2015 and 2016, over 1 million Guillemots are estimated to have died in the north-east Pacific having starved to death amidst a long-term heatwave that completely disrupted their food supply. Closer to home in the mid-2000s, the sandeel stocks in the North Sea collapsed, immediately followed by Kittiwake colonies in Scotland and England. Warmer temperatures gave an opportunity for new fish, including Snake Pipefish, to move further north, but these have low calorific value and present a choking hazard to seabird chicks. Other species that have seemingly benefitted from increased sea-surface temperatures include jellyfish, which provide direct feeding competition with species such as sandeel for plankton, as well as eating fish larvae themselves.

There are more losers than winners with climate change. Even something as simple as a change in timing between fish presence and seabird chicks hatching can create a temporal mismatch with devastating consequences.

The more we look, the more species and processes we see showing the detrimental signs of the rapid climate change that's happening all around us. Unfortunately, these aren't acting in isolation, but rather compounding the long-running pressures of overfishing and pollution.

One of the key ways to tackle climate change will be renewable energy developments such as wind, wave and tidal. Without appropriate consideration, however, these will affect seabirds through increased collision risk, denying them access to key foraging habitats, or through impacting the spawning grounds of key fish such



as herring and sprat. It has to be the right technology in the right place.

Most seabirds are habitat specialists. Common and Arctic Terns have evolved to be able to feed on very specific fish. Puffins and Manx Shearwaters have successfully used burrows to their advantage to raise young. Manx Shearwaters and Fulmars have developed long, streamlined wings to carry out foraging trips for days to many hundreds of kilometres away from their nests. They all have a very specific set of skills, meaning they can successfully carve out a living

with a resource that no other species can. This also means that they're particularly vulnerable to climate change and won't be able to adapt quickly enough to the changes that are already well underway. Some studies predict that Arctic Skuas and Storm Petrels might disappear from our coastline altogether, while Puffins, Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Guillemots and Arctic Terns, amongst others, will undergo huge declines between now and 2050.

But what about gulls? Our gull species, particularly the Herring Gull, are more adaptable – they're 'generalists' rather

than 'specialists' and so are better capable of changing their lifestyle when push comes to shove. Herring Gulls would prefer to continue nesting on offshore islands and would rather the traditional diet of whatever seafood they can find along the shoreline or snatch from an unsuspecting Puffin or Kittiwake returning to their nest. Less nesting habitat, fewer fish and fewer seabirds mean that their movement into our towns and cities shouldn't be seen as an intrusion; it's simply their escape plan.

The Oceans: Past, Present, and Future

The editorial committee invited a number of humans who support our struggle to contribute an article to the journal as we believe in working in solidarity with humans. In this fascinating article, Jess Spears paleoceanographer and eco-socialist explores the topic of the Ocean: Past, Present, and Future.

'The mud! Ye gods, imagine a cart full of whitish mud, filled with minutest shells, poured all wet and sticky and slimy on to some clean planks'

Lord George Campbell of the HMS Challenger

At approximately 6 o'clock in the morning on 23 March 1875, an Italian hemp rope bearing a lead weight at one end and carrying two glass thermometers was tossed into the ocean. The sailors and scientists of the Challenger Expedition watched as the rope descended, noting the white markings every 25 fathoms (150 feet or 45 meters) to indicate the ocean's depth. Two hours later, and plunging more than eight kilometres beneath the surface, the weighted rope touched bottom at the Mariana Trench. This was but one of the remarkable discoveries made during the 41-month journey around the world.

From just before Christmas 1872 to May 1876, six scientists and around 200 sailors traversed nearly 70,000 nautical miles, stopping at 360 'stations' to survey the life and conditions in our ocean basins. The Challenger Expedition discovered more than 4,700 new species, including critters inhabiting the deepest part of the ocean, which at the time was thought to be completely barren of life. It demonstrated the rich biodiversity of marine life and complex terrain, marking the beginning of oceanography, the study of the past, present and future conditions of our ocean.

One hundred and forty years later, squished into a tiny submersible, Victor Vescovo made just the third trip ever to the Mariana Trench. Out of his 200mm-thick window, he eagerly scanned the seafloor, looking for new forms of life. What did he find? A plastic bag.

The deep past

Over millions of years, ocean basins and continents change shape, expand and contract as they glide around on plates atop the mantle of the earth. They collide to form supercontinents and mountain chains, and then break apart as new ocean basins are born and others melt back into the earth. The sand at the beach was once an old mountain. Remember that the next time you walk on a sandy beach, barefoot, feeling the ancient mountains in between each toe.

The Atlantic Ocean basin is getting bigger. As the seafloor spreads, magma from inside the earth's mantle rises to the top and cools, forming a chain of oceanic mountains, the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Meanwhile, the Pacific Ocean basin is shrinking as the Pacific plate is plunging beneath the Philippine sea plate. It is this process that created the Mariana Trench.

As continental and oceanic plates dance around the surface, life arose – very likely from the ocean – and evolved, from single-celled organisms to multicellular, from drifting, swimming, hunting to crawling, running, hopping, socialising, flying and dam-building. And on one of the many branches of the tree of life came climbing, walking, thinking beings capable of developing theories and tools to then look back in time and uncover what was.

Knowing what came before can help us understand what will be; and, since our planet is covered in ocean, knowing what happened in the ocean is a big part of understanding earth's climate.

Alterations in climate, big and small, are recorded by the earth itself – in the bubbles captured in glaciers and ice sheets, in the width of tree rings, and in the shells of marine organisms. Indeed, while most people would be familiar with ice cores and tree rings, the unsung heroine of climate science is the mighty Foraminifera (usually called forams for short). These unicellular organisms have existed for around 500 million years, and handy for us, they

construct a shell that records the ocean conditions in which they lived. They can tell us about the water cycle (was there more or less rainfall compared to today), how much ice was on land during ice ages (and therefore the global sea level) and how hot or cold was the ocean temperature.

We can even look at past seasonal changes in ocean temperature as some species only live during the winter or are most prevalent during the summer. After a very short life of weeks to a few months, their micro shells end up buried in the mud on the seafloor, and over hundreds to millions of years, bit by bit, these mini time capsules preserve a record of the ocean.

Paleoceanographers (scientists studying the ancient ocean) collect cores of the seafloor, wash away the mud and examine the unearthed shells. More than 2,000 sediment cores have been collected from all over the world. Each core is sampled in millimetre or centimetre sections from top to bottom, with the top bearing the most recently deposited material and the bottom the oldest. The microshells are washed from each sample, identified under a microscope (using the thinnest paint brush one can find!) and then analysed for chemical changes linked to changes in the ocean.

Reading these time capsules reveals the emergence, evolution and destruction of ocean habitat, the 50-million-year cooling of the planet, the growth and decay of major ice sheets synchronised to changes in earth's orbit, and the recent warming of the earth by human activity. From such tiny shells, we've uncovered earth's dynamic past. We can see its long periods of relatively stable climate as well as sudden, sharp shifts that destroyed habitats and wiped-out entire species.

Around 56 million years ago, such an event occurred – the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM). A massive release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere caused the earth to suddenly warm. (Sound familiar?) Over 10,000 years, ocean surface temperature skyrocketed by as much as eight degrees.

Like today, a big chunk of the carbon dioxide and methane released was absorbed by the oceans, causing the ocean to become more acidic and hostile to shell-building organisms.

Oxygen levels plummeted in the deep ocean, likely because ocean circulation reduced. The impact on life as far as we can discern was varied, but for deep-dwelling Foraminifera it was disastrous. Between 30-50% of all species perished. It took roughly 100,000 years for greenhouse gases to be drawn down out of the atmosphere – by reacting with carbonate sediments on the seafloor coupled with chemical weathering of granite rocks.

Understanding the past is the key to the present. The history of the ocean is not yet fully known and likely can't be. The earth is too dynamic, too quick to destroy the archives recorded in the rocks and shells. Dense oceanic plates slide beneath continental plates, melting ancient seafloor as new seafloor is created. (The oldest seafloor, in the eastern Mediterranean Sea is a mere 340 million years in age and is part of a dying ocean.)

Yet, what we have uncovered so far underscores the connection between air, sea and land. A massive change in one will ripple out into the rest of the earth system, causing further perturbations and radically altering ecosystems. Though the earth was very different 56 million years ago – it was much hotter than today and there were no ice sheets – the implications for today's global warming are clear.

Today

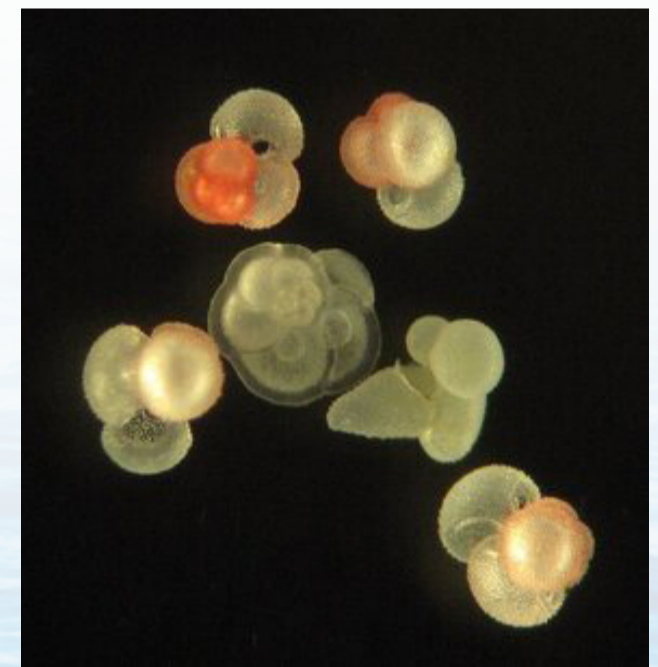
As part of the Challenger Expedition's mission, sediments from the top of the seafloor (and so relatively recently deposited) were collected and sifted for microfossils. The forams identified and saved for future research now provide us with a snapshot of the ocean's history from which we can measure changes over the last 140 years. Similar to photos of mountain glaciers from the 1970s to today, we can compare the specimens and the physical data (that is, temperature and salinity) to today's conditions and see the mark of global warming.

The ocean has absorbed 90% of all the heat trapped by the increase in greenhouse gases. Water can hold a lot of heat – we all know this from the hot water bottles warming our feet on winter nights. On the one hand, its relatively high heat capacity means it can absorb large quantities of energy without its overall temperature going up, resulting in a smaller increase in air temperature than we'd have otherwise.

On the other hand, that energy is absorbed by deadly storms and thrown back at us land-dwellers nonetheless. We can't escape it.

At the same time, just like we saw in the PETM, the uptake of carbon dioxide in the oceans – like the fizzy bubbles in cold soft drinks or champagne – is also making them more acidic. In fact, 30% of all CO₂ emissions have dissolved into the ocean. This is bad news for anything that makes a shell: corals, clams, oysters, pteropods and Foraminifera. Indeed, present day Foraminifera shells are nearly 80% thinner than the Challenger Foraminifera.

The ocean presently is 30% more acidic than 200 years ago. However, we are pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere ten times faster than during the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum. The CO₂ concentration is now higher than it has been in the last 3 million years. There is no analogue in earth's past for what's happening now. Unless we immediately halt the emissions, going to net zero emissions, globally, within the next two decades, we can expect things to get much, much worse.



Planktic Foraminifera collected from the northern Gulf of Mexico, magnified 255x Credit: Jess Spear

Foraminifera are not only used to uncover past changes in the ocean and earth's climate. They are also used in oil exploration, helping petroleum companies understand the age and past environment of sedimentary rocks and target certain areas for drilling. How ironic (and sad) that the fossils of these magnificently simple and elegant organisms are used to unearth the very substance that is now polluting the

CONTINUE ON PAGE 6

environment of their descendants. And obviously, not just the Foraminifera will feel the impact. The entire, complex and delicate marine ecosystem – from the pteropods at the ‘bottom’ of the food chain to the coral reefs providing habitat to thousands of other species – will be impacted. To what extent we can’t yet say for certain. But it won’t be good.

It’s not just the heat-trapping gases. Plastics made from oil (which accounts for 6–8 percent of all oil consumption, globally) are spreading to every area of the planet, from microplastics carried by the wind to the tops of some of the highest mountains to the plastic bag ‘discovered’ by Victor Vescovo at the bottom of the ocean. Every year anywhere from five to 12 million metric tons of plastic waste is dumped into the oceans. That’s the equivalent of a garbage truck every minute of every day. By about 2050, scientists predict, the combined weight of plastic in the ocean will be larger than all the fish.

The waste is concentrated in the world’s five ocean gyres – massive ocean vortices caused by the effect of the earth’s rotation on ocean currents. Most people are familiar with the massive one in the North Pacific – the Great Pacific Garbage Patch – which covers an area the size of Russia. Unfortunately, the plastic doesn’t just float around, benign to its surroundings. Marine mammals and birds, thinking it’s food, eat bunches of it and starve because it can’t be broken down and fills their stomachs so they can’t ingest actual food. It also gets entangled in coral reefs, blocking light and oxygen and releasing harmful toxins, which then allows disease to set in and kill the coral.

Not just the marine animals and birds are ingesting plastics; we are too. If you regularly eat raw oysters, a nice bowl of steamed mussels or linguine vongole, you could be consuming up to 11,000 tiny pieces of plastic every year. What’s dumped into the ocean doesn’t stay in the ocean. Whether we realise it or not, we are connected.

Future

The ocean remains largely unexplored – only one percent of the seafloor and around five percent of the water. Though, it’s not for lack of trying. The first thermometers attached to the rope sent down by the Challenger Expedition came up broken due to the immense pressure (1,000 times heavier than air). In addition, frigid temperatures,

lack of light and all that water make data collection extremely challenging. Satellite observations, which can more easily capture data over time, revealing seasonal changes, average conditions and what is or is not anomalous, are limited simply because water is not an easy veil to pierce.

Still, what awe-inspiring wonders we have discovered. When I was about ten years old, I found a box of shells my dad collected from scuba diving excursions in Florida. What creatures could make such beautiful and oddly shaped homes, I wondered. There was also a book he kept, *Life in the Oceans*, that I poured over, memorising the names of brilliantly-coloured fish and wishing I could see them in real life. Around a decade later, I sat in my college dorm room eagerly recording each episode of the BBC series *Blue Planet* so I could watch it again and again (this was clearly before everything and anything could be found online and on demand streaming!). The newest episodes, released in 2017, were the most popular show in Britain, and basically broke the internet in China from the sheer number of people downloading episodes.

David Attenborough, narrator of the *Blue Planet* series says, ‘Never before have we had such an awareness, never before have we had the power to do something. Surely we have a responsibility to care for our blue planet.’ But the reality is that never before have people been so overwhelmed by the scale and magnitude of the problem, felt compelled and motivated to do something, but then simultaneously are provided with individual-focused solutions – stop using plastic straws and plastics – that aren’t really feasible with their busy lives and feel wholly inadequate. How will refusing plastic straws prevent the big fishing industry from dumping their plastic nets, which make up nearly half of the plastic debris in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch? How do we stop the oil spills, the oil drilling, the overfishing, the chemical runoff from factory farms, commercial whale hunting, dredging (scraping the seafloor, destroying the ecosystem) and the greenhouse gases spewing into the air? How do we stop all the destruction on land, too, which inevitably affects the ocean? Even if we were successful in banning the use of all non-recyclable plastics in consumer products, which we should absolutely fight for, there would still be huge amounts of plastic still being dumped or lost in the ocean. Capitalist production would still reign

supreme. The oceans would still be used as a dumping ground for pollution from the air and the land.

Let’s face it, what happens in the ocean, most of the time, is out of sight, out of mind. We can’t see the impact of ocean acidification or warming. Yes, you can read about it. You can see photos and hear reports from scientific studies warning of the dangers. But we will feel the impact of this destruction. We already are, really. We just haven’t yet connected the dots firmly in our minds.

With sea-level rise, superstorms, mega droughts, crop failure and mass species extinction, nature is forcing us to see what capitalism denies – the interconnectedness of all life. And that ours is an ocean planet. If we allow business-as-usual to continue, the impact on us will become greater and more severe.

As Karl Marx put it in 1844, ‘Nature is our inorganic body, that is to say, nature in so far as it is not the human body. Humans live from nature . . . and we must maintain a continuing dialogue with it if we are not to die. To say that our physical and mental life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for humans are a part of nature.’

How can we stop the destruction? Let us start by taking all this in, from the history of our ocean told by the tiny Foraminifera, the discoveries of wondrous and spectacular marine life from the first oceanographic voyage by Challenger to today, to the knowledge that our society, as organised today under capitalism is ‘poking an angry beast.’

Take it all in and combine it with the other facts about life under capitalism – immense poverty, war, rampant inequality, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. All this needless suffering so the already monstrously rich can get richer. And then act. Act with an understanding that small tinkering here and there, that blames individuals while letting big business off the hook, isn’t going to work. The ocean will remind us of this if we dare ignore it. Act with confidence that the desire to protect our oceans (and ourselves) is clearly widespread. Collectively, we can remake our world with the needs of people and nature at the heart of our economy. We don’t have to go on as is. Indeed, we cannot go on as is. Let us reimagine a beautiful, socialist world on our magnificent blue planet and fight to make that a reality.

Gull Manifesto

All the hard work has paid off and we are delighted to say that our manifesto has finally gone to print. This is an important document as it is not a top-down manifesto but one that was forged by thousands of grass-root gull activists all over Ireland north and south. We were also extremely fortunate to draw on the experience of our fellow international comrades as from the start we have viewed our uprising in Ireland as part of a wider international movement for change.

We aim to have copies of the manifesto available for birds, animals and humans in every corner of the country. This will be no easy task and will require a large mobilisation of activists over the coming few weeks in order to achieve our goal. The organising committee will be setting up regional and local distribution depots and we would like to encourage everyone to get involved. There will be distribution groups operating shifts at different time slots throughout the day if you would like to be part of a flock distribution. Alternatively, copies can be obtained from the distribution depots to distribute to family, friends and neighbours or anyone we can win over to support our struggle.

Unite and fight: Gulls Join P&O Workers Solidarity Protest



Earlier this year, Dublin Gulls joined a protest at Dublin Port against the disgraceful mass sacking of workers by ferry company P&O at Larne and their replacement with cheaper labour.

The fight of the P&O crew members has received the backing of activist gulls across the island, outraged at the disgraceful treatment of the workers and seeing common cause in their struggle against capitalism.

As one gull in attendance told us, 'The system that oppresses the workers, extracts their labour and then throws them onto the scrapheap when there is more money to be made, is the same system that exploits the resources of our coastal habitats and destroys our natural environment.'

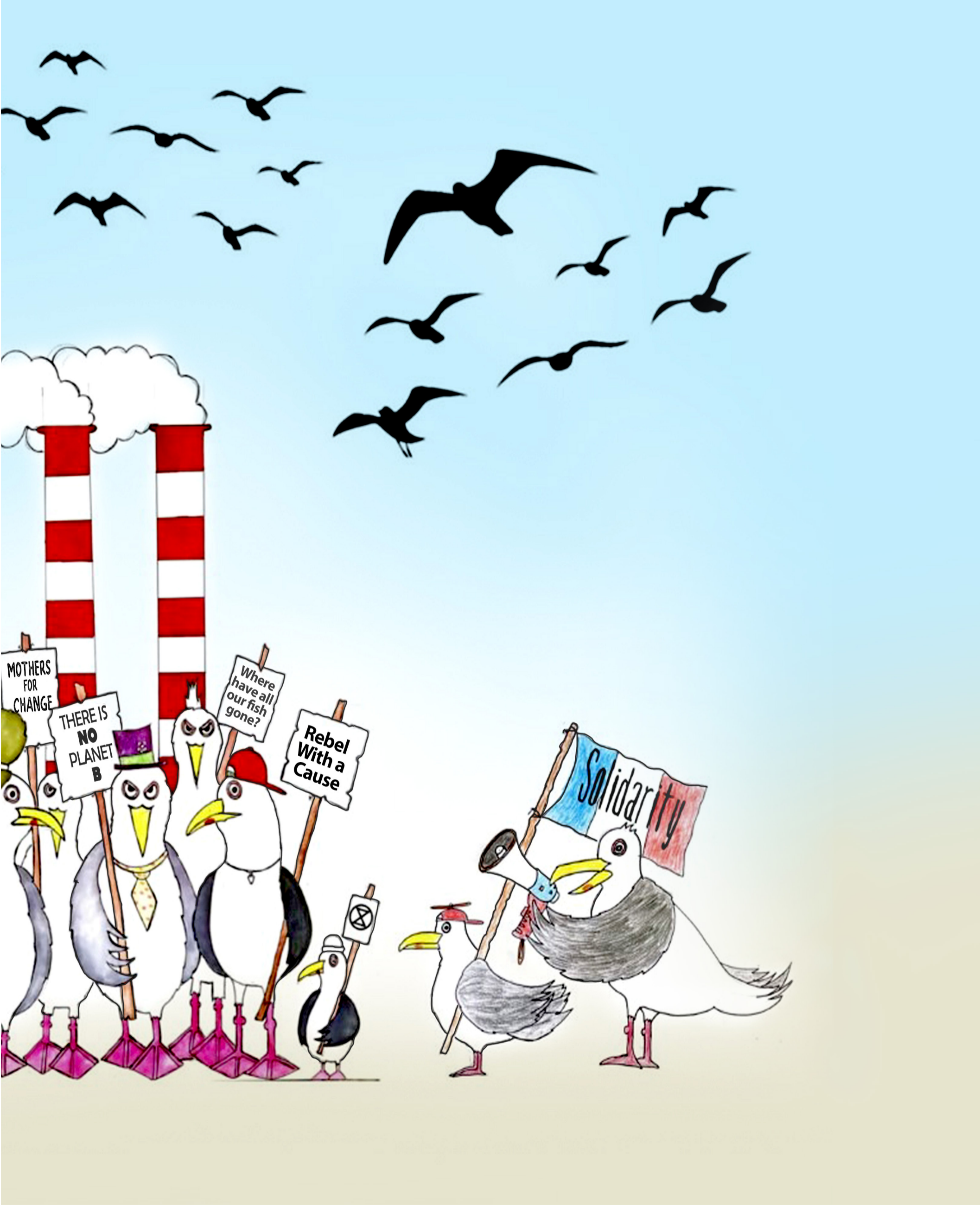
The Left-Wing Journal sends its solidarity to the P&O workers and all those like them. We are many. They are few.

Banner making workshop

The success of the rebel banner making workshops in Cork over the last six weeks was clear to see at the rally. An impressive display of banners displaying messages of resistance brought great colour and energy to the event. After receiving such positive feedback, those running the workshop have announced today that they will be restarting workshops again next month. The workshops will run for four weeks in Cobh. Places are limited so it's advised to sign up quickly. Bookings can be made directly with the Cobh branch. All materials will be provided; however activists are encouraged to bring their own driftwood if possible.

Urban Gull Uprising





OUR POSTER

Open Letter to Humans From Bay Gull member of Mothers for Change Group

2km as the crow flies from Poolbeg lighthouse,
Dublin.

To whom might listen,

Humans complain about our scavenging. You talk about ways to stop us “stealing” your food. But you never ask why we do this or indeed why we need to do this.

All we have ever wanted was a nice peaceful place to live and access to food for our families. However, in a world that changes all the time, we also needed to change. In recent decades as our natural habitats and those of our prey have been stolen from us, we had to adapt.

We face many threats on a daily basis, but the way humans use the land which surrounds us has caused the most harm. The loss and degradation of our natural habitat arose primarily due to human activities such as urbanisation and intensive farming and fishing. This affected our homes and our food supplies. As a result, we are forced to find other places to live and other sources of food.

It is easy for humans to criticise us for taking your food when you have unlimited access to food in supermarkets. It is not easy for us. Our homes are now further away from our natural sources of food. We would love to have an abundance of our own food sources like generations before us. To access these food sources we are now forced to venture far from our homes. Sometimes we have to travel more than 50km inland or fly over the oceans in formation behind fishing boats, hoping to catch small fish to sustain ourselves. We spend

huge amounts of our time and energy foraging for prey, often with no success.

I want you to know that it is hunger that drives us towards your food supplies. There are half eaten meals overflowing in refuse bins in most urban areas around the country. It is the obvious choice for us. It make sense that we take this left over food, so freely available and avoid using all our energy and time foraging for prey that may not even be there.

Unfortunately, foraging for this human food is not easy or without risk. There is much indigestible plastic that humans throw away alongside good edible waste and this is leading to the deaths of my fellow birds. In fact, at least 1 out of 2 birds in the world have been negatively affected by plastic either through ingestion where plastic replaces space in our stomach, or by entanglement and choking on plastics bags or nets. Some researchers even found traces of plastic additives in our eggs. Yes, it even impacts our innocent chicks.

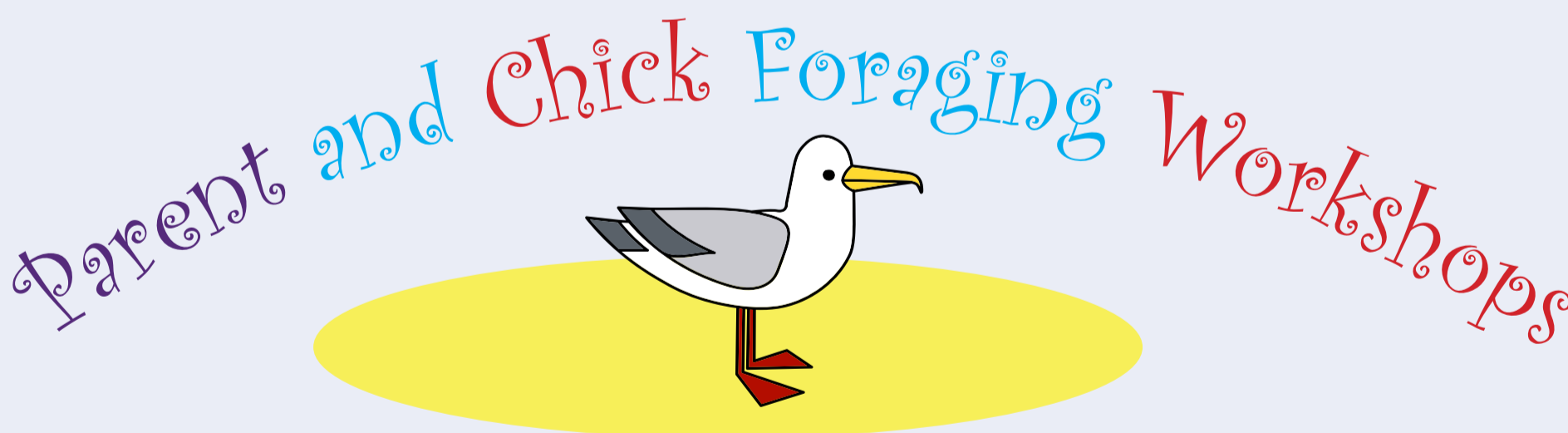
I know what humans are going to ask: Why not move further away to be near better sources of food ? Some gulls have tried to migrate, going as far as Spain, West Africa or the Middle East. However, here too, the same conditions are found with some reporting back to us that things are even worse than in other location because ecological legislation and laws are much weaker.

It is true, we can on occasions be voracious, aggressive, uncivilised and opportunistic. But, I will leave you two concluding questions. What if you were in our situation ? How far would you go to support yourself and your family, when all other options were taken from you?

I hope that by reaching out to you in this letter you begin to understand our struggle for survival.

Yours sincerely,

Bay Gull



Get back to nature and rediscover your lost skills with dynamic workshops organised by the Mothers for Change Group. The workshops will be led by experienced gulls who will take parents and chicks out to sea to share tips and techniques for catching fish. These are activist-based workshops and will include talks on how to develop strategies for building a movement for change. Free activist pack for all attendees.

Location and Dates: Cork, Cobh; first Saturday of every month. Time: 7am

Location and Dates: Wicklow, Bray Head; first Wednesday of every month. Time: 7am

Location and Dates: Donegal, Killybegs Pier; first Friday of every month. Time: 7am

Location and Dates: Wexford, Kilmore Quay Pier; first Monday of every month. Time: 7am

Culture

We are delighted to announce the journal has established a new cultural committee, who will oversee the cultural section of the paper. The committee are now accepting submissions of poetry, creative writing and image-based artwork for print in the journal. They welcome submissions from humans and non-humans at any stages in their career, from emerging to established artists. All submissions will be reviewed and selected by the committee. We also hope to include reviews of cultural events in forthcoming issues. If you are planning a cultural event you would like to have reviewed, please contact the cultural committee with details. If you would like to review an event or join the cultural committee, we would love to hear from you. The cultural committee plan to organise a number of dynamic cultural events at different locations around the country over the coming year, details will be available in next issue.

WHAT THE GULL SAW: I was on a sill half way down Liberty Hall when I sees God's hole lightshow breakin out through the mudabove and a great wide swirlin whirlpool set in motion through the clouds right dere in the centre of the sky right dere above the quays swirlin and whirlin and suckin and suckin and suckin and then I sees a beam o' light a funnel o' real strong light pushin down to the boardwalk where all dem junkies do be partyin and husslin nonstop baby nonstop and 'fore long the junkies start risin and risin and floatin and floatin and all o' dem with their arms spread out hundurds o' dem grinning like a gloryflock o' crucifixions floatin up up up and away bein sucked into the whirling nuttin in the centre of the skydrain and then dem be gonners man all o' dem be gone and the holy spirit's zips it up and dats why dere ain't no junkies or no junkies' children or no junkies' prams or no junkies' roarin into dere mobies or no wailin screechin shoutin yappin chucklin bloodchuckin junkies left on the boardwalk today and don't let anyone tell you no difference mudda or you be some fuggin eejit to begin with

Gull Song

we come into the vacuum where the city was and we become
the vacuum you can hear your hunger speaking in our noise
and you can hear your hunger for the sea where you
came in like us and now we want your flat roof and your sandwich we want the whole of the
sea and the brooding clouds our cries cut through your dropped ice cream and your almost
empty bag we come with necks like monuments to nothing
we come with eyes as cold as spreadsheets there is no warmth
in our endless whiteness just the grey shadow of possession
wherever you are you can hear us we came in with the herring
and stayed we came further in gathering your waste in our
plastic beaks we are rhythm distributed in space we're
stamping on the ground to make the rain come the worm rise
we see a hand move to a mouth we come closer you see us
we back off we live in your debt in the wreck of your greed
we scavenge in the turned tide of lunch we come nesting
who cares where we lay as long as there's a ledge or the
edge of a cathedral roof we are just too much and we live in
the too much of the takeaway the too many kebabs and chips
we dance with your too many leftovers we are leftovers too
with prehistoric feathers look at our eyes you are under
our surveillance our cries drown out your voices look at us
look at us hanging on look at us we almost love you



SURVIVAL CITY

So what's it all about then, in Survival City?

Survival.

And who or what survives?

The fittest survive.

And what is the prize of survival?

Survival is the prize of survival.

And will there be a last thing to survive?

Logically and inevitably, there will be a last thing of all to survive.

And what will that be?

The last thing to survive will be survival itself.

Will anything survive survival?

Nothing atall will survive survival.

Then I am for nothing atall.

Anthropocene & the Great Species Extinction

Species extinctions are on the rise, and the fightback is on to save the planet from the fallout – views from a human environmental activist.

Twenty-first century humans are uniquely placed to appreciate the remarkable occurrence of biodiversity on Earth. Technological advancements mean we now have cameras to access the deepest parts of the ocean and to skim the top of rainforests in search of new and diverse species. New discoveries are frequent and fascinating. Ten years ago, the gastric-brooding frog was discovered in Australia. This frog has the unique ability to breed its offspring, from egg to tadpole, in its gastric band. It releases a substance to keep the stomach in a non-functional state until it 'births' the fully developed tadpoles. It is a fascinating example of the ingenuity of evolution.

The vast and varied life forms that scientists are constantly discovering show the creative force within biological evolution and its remarkable power. In turn, the nature we experience shapes art and culture, and the relationships we build with animals can help us overcome our sense of alienation. We use it as a means through which we feed, shelter and clothe ourselves. In other words, it has an explicit and implicit value to humans.

But while we are uniquely placed to take account of the role of nature in the 21st century, we are also in a position to witness what is being termed the 'Sixth Extinction' or 'Geocide Ecocide'. The new tech advances also give us a glaring view of the endless destruction that human activity under capitalism is reaping on our planet before our very eyes.

Naturally, green activism is on the rise in response. As doomsday reports are published daily, climate activists and socialists are engaging in increasing levels of climate activism. Naomi Klein's book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs Climate Change* has sparked a debate among a new generation of environmental activists about the solution to climate change and introduced many to left-wing explanations. During the peak of anti-capitalist movements, the World Wildlife Fund once called for recognition of socioeconomic factors as an issue, and now that fight is on again.

Capitalists, on the other hand, are working hard to commodify the crisis – defining it as 'Natural Capital', and seeking to make profits, while avoiding the root of the issue. The plan is that nation states and corporations can establish formal markets in 'ecosystem services'. It has paved the way for the launch of forced conservation areas or 'rewilding' centres that push humans off the land, creating refugees in poorer parts of the world but providing a hefty revenue stream for the companies in charge of the centres.

For example, it led to the disastrous Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve in Amsterdam, where populations of large herbivores were allowed to rise unchecked, causing trees to die and wild bird populations to decline, and leading to the slaughter of more than half the red deer, Konik horses and Heck cattle because they were starving. The animals were not the priority; the profits were. In other words, capitalist solutions to capitalist problems.

Anthropocene

We have entered a new geological epoch – a new geographical age whereby human activity is the dominant influence on climate and the environment – the Anthropocene. The idea that we have entered a new geo-era is radical, and it is important to make the distinction that the active human engineering of ecology under capitalism is determined by ruling class aspirations for profit. It has paved the way for and justifies a whole host of atrocities and mass destruction, in the name of profits for the few, not the many. The vast and vicious attack on biodiversity as a result is shocking in both scale and scope.

Extinction rates have sharply increased under capitalism, particularly since neo-liberalism developed. Between 1970 and 2010, the number of vertebrates dropped by 50%.

In some cases, we are losing dozens of species a day, and ten years after the gastric-brooding frog was discovered in Australia, it became extinct. This onslaught has led to many predicting that we are in the throes of a 'Sixth Extinction'. We are witnessing a geological event unfolding in our lifetime – which is very quick! Yellow-Legged Frogs once thrived in Panama but have been wiped out almost overnight. Scientists argue that the extinction rates among amphibians are similar to those of the cretaceous period which wiped

out the dinosaurs. The Yellow-Legged Frogs of Panama now only appear in the plastic figurines sold as tourist souvenirs in a stark reminder of the impact of capitalism on biodiversity.

Lots of column inches have rightly been dedicated to the declining status of rhinos, giraffes, orangutans, tigers and other large land mammals that are either being hunted into extinction to salivate the tastes of an elite class or as a result of habitat destruction. Scientists warn that if we lose the animals that are now listed as critically endangered, it will certainly propel us into the Sixth Extinction, which in turn could lead to the 'Perfect Storm', triggering a number of ecological events that will have a devastating impact on the environment. We have the lifetime of a generation to solve this.

Mainstream Environmental Response

Many mainstream commentators wrongly argue that the rise in species extinction is simply as a result of the rise in human population. There was an obvious increase in human population during the periods that coincide with the increase in species extinction, but what these commentators fail to uncover was that this period also saw more land being pushed into urbanization and agriculture in order to produce for profit. As David Harvey, Professor of Anthropology and Geography at the City University of New York, says, 'All critical examinations of the human relation to nature are simultaneously critical examinations of society'.

More people do not directly lead to more species becoming extinct. Rather, it is a question of how society responds to the needs of these people. Does it push all of humanity's labour and the planet's resources into creating corporate entities that choke on fossil fuels as they spew out a constant revolving door of commodities while commodifying nature in the process? Or does it democratically decide to allocate our resources and raw materials towards meeting people's real needs in a sustainable manner?

Mainstream environmentalists quite often mistake symptoms as causes. Many refer to the classification 'HIPPO' as a guide to explain climate change. 'HIPPO' stands for: Habitat Destruction, Invasive Species, Pollution, Population and Over-Harvesting. All of these affect climate change, but none operate in a vacuum.

They are a result of, and necessary for, capitalism to thrive.

A glimpse back at the rich tapestry of human history prior to capitalism's relatively recent development tells the story of Maori Tribes and Amazonians who all had a collective and responsible approach to ensuring the sustainable use of their environment. One example of such was the common practice of banning fishing during spawning season to prevent deterioration of species levels.

Pre-capitalist societies depended on a functional dialectical interrelationship with nature to ensure their existence. Of course, there is little doubt that our ancestors would have pushed certain species to the brink and beyond. The global expansion of *Homo sapiens* coincided with the extinction of mega-fauna like the woolly mammoth and saber-toothed tiger, but in many cases the ecological role of these animals was subsequently taken up by humans. Ultimately, the human impact would have carried similar benefits as threats and resulted in an ecological dynamic that enhanced bio-diversity through constant low-level intervention of rotational subsistence agriculture and habitual control for hunting. It kept eco-niches open that would have closed down if left desolate.

Low level conservation is beneficial, and human settlements created a diverse mosaic of habitats.

Capitalism and the Environment

Capitalism, however, will not allow for low level conservation, nor seasonal fishing or the necessary precautions or preservation methods necessary for sustainability. It isn't interested in sustainability because it cannot be. Inherent to capitalism is the drive to grow and produce and profit under the pressure of competition. It doesn't leave space for sustainable precautions because that represents a loss in profits.

Large corporations have an unyielding drive for profits, not simply because the humans running them are greedy (though they almost certainly are), but because the whole system of capitalism demands greater and greater returns. If Shell, for example, weren't squeezing every drop of oil from the ground, burning people out of their homes in Nigeria and destroying communities in the West of Ireland, then Exxon or BP would. If Shell were to take seriously its false claims to care about the environment, they would spend profits on sustainability and taking on renewable energy processes. Meanwhile, another corporation would step in and take up their slice of the market share, using

their profits to develop technologies and develop marketing strategies. They can now undercut Shell, who loses out. This simple example illustrates how corporations under capitalism will always destroy ecosystems, will always dump toxic waste, overfish, pollute the atmosphere etc. Because, in order to stay in business, they have no choice but to ruthlessly compete or fail to exist.

Joseph Choonara was right when he said that 'the most striking difference between capitalism and earlier societies is that people worked mainly to produce goods for their own consumption, but [with] capitalism...the goods are produced not to meet needs but to sell'. Biodiversity and ecosystems that lie outside of commodity production for profit simply fail to be registered as having any meaningful value.

To cement this ideology in practice, there is great cooperation between the political ruling class and the capitalists. Corporations can control the research agenda, influence policy and push new technologies through. Cargill is an American privately-held global corporation and a big player in the agricultural industry, which has an over-reliance on fossil fuels. Cargill has also seemingly developed a conscience and is devoted to 'working to improve the sustainability of the palm oil industry'. The reality however is that, with all the economic and political power being such a large corporation provides, they are in a position to push through another market solution that ensures no disruption to profits but one that is equally as destructive.

Reform Vs Revolution

As socialists, we don't approach this crisis in isolation from human society or something that carries greater importance over other societal crises. They are all weaved from the same cloth and will take a uniformed approach to tackle. Twenty thousand people in developing countries die from pesticides every year; 175 million in India and 130 million in China rely on grains that are produced by over-pumping water, which is not an infinite resource. Heart disease, birth defects and stunted lung development have been observed in children who play outside where large amounts of manure is spread. There will be an increase in climate change refugees at a time when Europe and America wrap barbed wires around their borders.

Reform under capitalism is very limited and depends on 'market signals' – whether or not it becomes profitable

enough to make these changes. The question we must ask ourselves is whether we want the planet and our existence to hinge on someone else's ability to make profits?

Capitalism's solutions largely revolve around consumer choice and technological solutions. Elon Musk – the man who extravagantly tied a car to a rocket and sent it into space but will not pay the workers in his factories a living wage – will not save us from environmental disaster via carbon-reducing technologies, namely because they don't exist. Electric cars will not save us either; they will still need to be mass produced in factories and run off the electricity that relies on fossil fuels.

Even where environmental regulation is strongest, largely in temperate climates, there is still a decline of 36% in biodiversity in total. Many advocate for more people to take up vegan diets to offset emissions from meat farming, but the solution is not just individual dietary changes – rather, a radical transformation of the food system is needed. Dietary changes also offer no alternative to the communities who rely on farming, particularly in South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa. However, if agriculture were rooted in the collective ownership of land, then we would be capable of producing enough food to feed the world in a sustainable manner.

Modern agriculture is destructive because it is designed on the basis of a food system driven by profit and dominated by supermarkets and multinationals. It is the need for profit margins that creates waste, encourages damaging practices and sees food allocated unevenly.

Seasonal production is possible. Sustainable production is possible. Species preservation is possible. But none of it is possible under the confines of capitalism.

While we are fighting for a better society which can overcome other by-products of capitalism like oppression and extreme inequality, we must link up these struggles with the fight against climate destruction. Not simply because they have the same maker and because our struggles will have many more activists if we fight for these things together, but crucially because of the threat that climate change and species extinction pose to our lives and livelihoods. Without the fight to end climate change, there will be no chance of a different and better kind of society to speak of.

Education

We are not all the same!



COMMON GULL

Scientific name: *Larus canus*
Bird family: Gulls and terns

The Common Gull looks like a small, gentler version of the Herring Gull, with greenish legs and a yellow bill. Despite its name, it is not at all common in most inland areas, though it can be abundant on the coast and in some eastern counties. They are now seen more often in towns and on housing estates in winter.

What they eat: Worms, insects, fish, carrion and rubbish.

Measurements:

Length 40-42cm

Wingspan 110-130cm



GLAUCOUS GULL

Scientific name: *Larus hyperboreus*
Bird family: Gulls and terns

The Glaucous Gull is a large, pale gull with white wing tips. Younger birds are creamy white or more biscuit coloured, depending on age. All have pale wingtips. It is bigger than a Herring Gull and bulkier, with a fiercer expression, larger beak and squarer head than the smaller but virtually identically-plumaged Iceland Gull.

What they eat: Scavenges for carrion, shellfish and scraps.

Measurements:

Length 62-68cm

Wingspan 150-160cm



LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Scientific name: *Larus fuscus*
Bird family: Gulls and terns

Slightly smaller than a Herring Gull, the lesser black-backed gull has a dark grey to black back and wings, yellow bill and yellow legs. Their world population is found entirely in Europe.

What they eat: Omnivore - scavenges a wide range of food.

Measurements:

Length 52-64cm

Wingspan 135-150cm

Weight 620-1,000g



YELLOW-LEGGED GULL

Scientific name: *Larus michahellis*
Bird family: Gulls and terns

The Yellow-Legged Gull has only recently been recognised as a species in its own right, having previously been considered to be a race of Herring Gull. Adults have darker grey backs and wings than Herring Gulls but are paler than Lesser Black-Backed Gulls. They have more black in the wing tips than Herring Gulls and smaller white 'mirrors'. The legs are bright yellow, there is a red ring around the eye, and the bill is yellow with a large red spot. In non-breeding plumage, the head is less streaked and whiter than Herring Gulls.

What they eat: Omnivorous- a scavenger

Measurements:

Length 55-67cm



HERRING GULL

Scientific name: *Larus argentatus*
Bird family: Gulls and terns

Herring Gulls are large, noisy gulls found throughout the year around coasts and inland around rubbish tips, fields, large reservoirs and lakes, especially during winter. Adults have light grey backs, white under parts and black wing tips with white 'mirrors'. Their legs are pink, with webbed feet, and they have heavy, slightly hooked bills marked with a red spot. Young birds are mottled brown.

What they eat: Omnivorous- carrion, offal, seeds, fruits, young birds, eggs, small mammals, insects and fish.

Measurements:

Length 54-60cm

Wingspan 130-150cm

Weight 690-1440g

Public Talk

Rights of Nature

Location:
Cork Port

Time:
8pm

Date: **28th August 2022**

**Talk is open to
all humans, animals
and birds**





Campaign Fundraiser

The Eagles Tribute Band

Late night gig 11pm-4am

Rosslare Harbour

Sunday 21st August 2022

Funds go directly to fund the campaign and the publication of our journal.

Monster raffle on the night.

Raffle tickets available from local activists and at the door on the night.

Campaign merchandise

TOTE BAGS:



COLOUR: BLUE
ONE SIZE, 100% COTTON

BASEBALL CAPS:



COLOUR: RED, BLACK, BLUE
SIZES: S, M, L

FLAGS:



COLOUR: RED WITH BLACK TEXT
3 SIZES: 3FT, 6FT, 10FT
PLEASE NOTE: POLE NOT INCLUDED

T- SHIRTS:



COLOUR: BLACK, WHITE, RED, BLUE
SIZES: S, M, L

T- SHIRTS:



COLOUR: BLACK, WHITE, RED, BLUE
SIZES: S, M, L

T- SHIRTS:



COLOUR: BLACK, WHITE, RED, BLUE
SIZES: S, M, L

T- SHIRTS:



COLOUR: BLACK, WHITE, RED, BLUE
SIZES: S, M, L

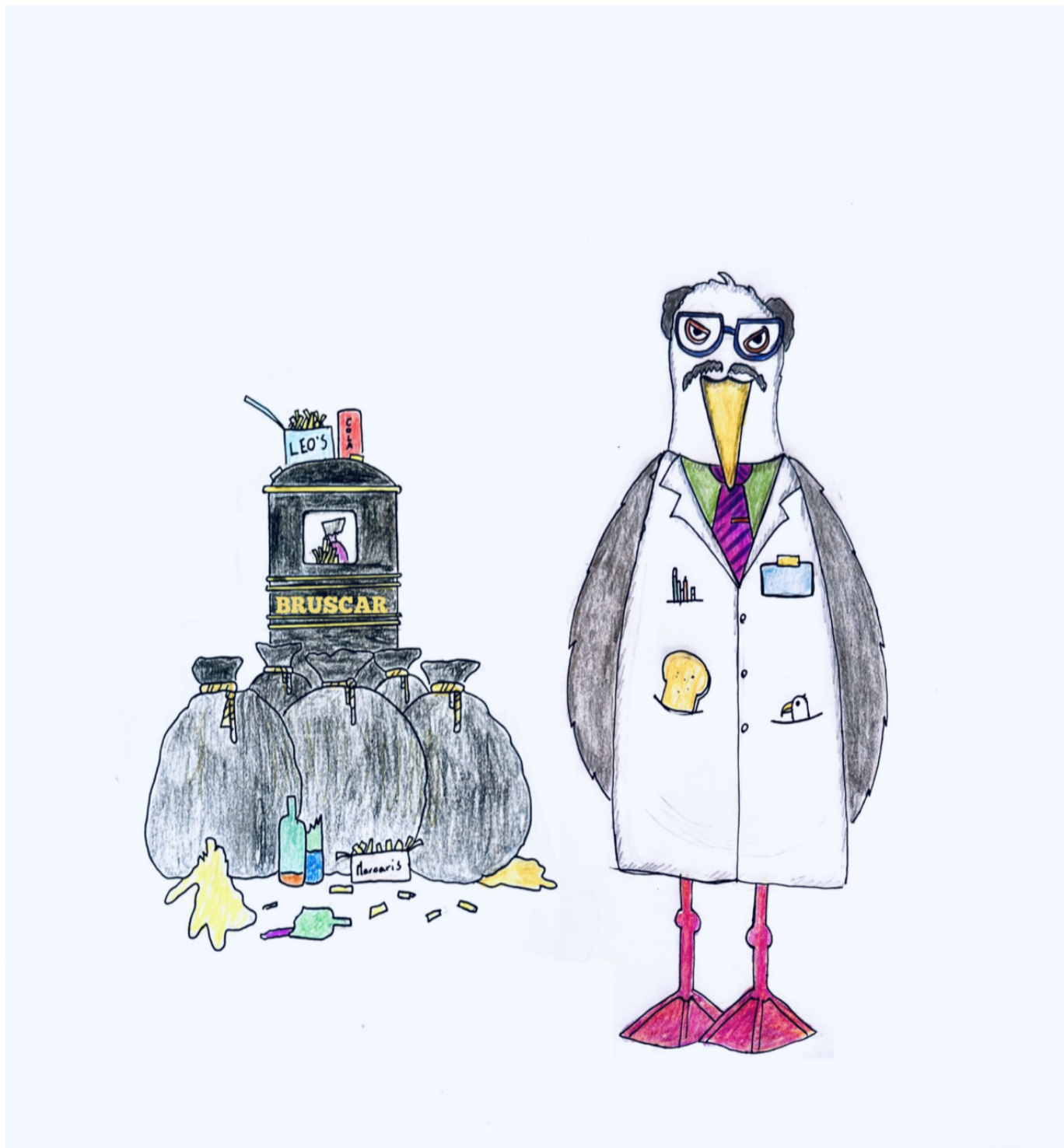
BADGES:



Hints and Tips for Humans

The current warm spell of weather and on-going Covid-19 crisis have resulted in a huge increase in outdoor dining. We put together some helpful tips that will help avoid conflict between us gulls and humans:

- Do not feed gulls! Gulls now associate humans with food. This can cause conflict when they try and snatch food.
- Explain to your children the reason why humans shouldn't feed gulls.
- Gulls have learned to snatch food from people by swooping down at humans, so try eating against a wall if you are eating in an area with gulls nearby.
- Never leave food unattended.
- Keep away from nests and young gulls. Gulls are very protective of their young and may attack people or pets if they feel threatened.
- Don't leave unwanted food outside – bin it!
- Don't overfill rubbish bins as this will only attract gulls.



Artist: Augustine O'Donoghue
 Website: www.augustineodonoghue.com
 ✉ augustineodonoghue@hotmail.com
 @augustineodonoghue

Thanks to all who contributed to creating the Left-Wing Journal and helping make the gulls dream of revolution possible. Ann Ryan, Gulls Not Culls, Eoin Wheelan, Joséphine Françoise Sabathé-Boulaud, Zoë Skoulding, Colin Giles, Jess Spears, Dave Lordan, Adrienne Wallace, Aileen Wallace, Eoin McCormac, Amy O Donoghue, Brian Burke, Kate O Shea, Mothers for Change Group, Shay Ryan, John Whipple, Manuelle Ratte, Adam Kane, Andi McGarry, Lisa Rineen, Bay Gull, BirdWatch Ireland, UCD Parity Studios, all the team working on Ports, Past and Present project, University College Cork, Wexford County Council, Aberystwyth University.