

All in a Day's Work

Dave Wall— Citizen Science Officer

Dave Wall is Citizen Science Officer with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford. He is responsible for the Explore Your Shore! and Dragonfly Ireland 2019-2024 citizen science projects.

www.exploreyourshore.ie



Dave Wall

Images courtesy of Dave Wall

Where do you work?

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is based in Waterford, but I currently work mostly from my home in Bangor, Co. Down.

Have you always been interested in what you do?

Yes, I've always been interested in wildlife. I grew up watching Jacques Cousteau and David Attenborough on the BBC back in the 80's and loved biology at school. I was lucky enough to have a science teacher who encouraged me and was one of the few people I knew who entered university specifically to study Zoology!

What training did you do to get where you are today?

I graduated from Trinity College in 1996 and took the scenic route to my current job. First, I was an otter surveyor at Sherkin Island Marine Station, which was a fantastic opportunity for a new graduate. I then studied badgers in the Austrian Alps, before returning to Ireland to study foxes. I worked as a wildlife consultant, before spending 10 years working on ships as a marine mammal surveyor. I later switched to coastal community engagement, before taking up my current post at the Data Centre in 2019... phew!

What is a day in your life like?

No two days are the same. My role includes checking species records submitted by Citizen Scientists (volunteers, just like

you, who submit sightings to exploreyourshore.ie), to ensure the correct species identification has been made. On other days I might deliver talks or workshops on Citizen Science, or head out to survey a marine or freshwater site.

What is your main aim?

To improve our knowledge of Irish biodiversity (all living things), and in particular our knowledge of marine species. Ultimately, I want to help protect Ireland's biodiversity and work to restore our lost biodiversity. Ask your parents or grandparents about what wildlife was around when they were young, and you may be surprised at what they tell you!

What is the best thing about your job?

Meeting our network of fantastic Citizen Science volunteers and helping increase public knowledge of marine and freshwater species. I also love learning about new species, even if I work until I'm 101 I will learn something new every day!

What is the worst thing?

Realizing just how much of our marine biodiversity has been lost in the past 200 years.

Where does your work take you?

One of the great things about my job is I get to visit different parts of Ireland. I have been around most of the Irish coast working on ships, or as a diver

for 21 years, but there's always somewhere new to explore!

Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I work as part of a team of 10 people at the National Biodiversity Data centre.

What advice would you give someone wanting to do your job?

Stick with it and take every opportunity that passes your way, as you never know where it will lead you!

What would you do if you could do something else?

I'd be diving 😊

What is the best piece of advice you have ever had?

My granny used to tell me... 'Love many, trust few, and always paddle your own canoe' ... and she was right!



Surveying humpback whales, Cape Verde, 2006



Preparing for a research trip on the RV Celtic Explorer, 2009



On a survey in the Celtic Sea, 2014



Explore Your Shore Workshop in 2019

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