

# Coastal Plastic Pollution

Interview with Ólavur Sjørðarberg

Coastal and ocean plastic pollution is a global issue that undoubtedly impacts the Faroe Islands. I spoke with Ólavur to learn more about how this issue impacts fishermen in the Faroes. Ólavur has been fishing in his spare time for his whole life and he has always had a strong relationship with the sea.

Ólavur does not find plastic out on the water; it is always very clean, however, he often sees plastic and other waste in harbours and near villages. He sees fish boxes and food packaging from sweets and juice boxes that kids let go of in the wind. Ólavur has never found plastic in the stomachs of fish but he has heard stories of it happening.

Fishermen and other boat users have a strong connection to the coastal environment and take care not to litter. They are able to properly dispose of their waste in Klasvík harbour, these facilities, which have been used for thirty years, have contributed to a cleaner coast.

Speaking with Ólavur instilled hope for the environment in me; I could feel the care that fishermen have for the sea. I felt like anything was possible because we have the passion and enthusiasm of many great people on our side.

Ólavur told me that while he doesn't see plastic out on the water that there are a number of areas that give a good indication of how clean the sea is. In these three places rubbish from the sea washes up on the rocks.

First, I went to the bridge in Haraldssund, here I saw a shocking amount of plastic and other waste covering the rocks.





In amongst the rubbish there was a duck nesting, this quickly overshadowed the hope I felt earlier. I felt so much pity for the duck that was forced to sit in our pollution.



Next, I went to the bridge in Hvannasund where I found much less rubbish but still there was a number of plastic ropes and smaller pieces of plastic.



Finally, I went to Viðareiði and visited the beach on the eastern side of the town, here I found a lot of rubbish including a number of car tyres and large lumps of polystyrene.



While we may not be able to see plastic floating out in the sea, it is there and it will wash up on our shores. It is clear to me after talking to Ólavur that people are motivated to keep the environment clean however we need to organise effectively. Ruddy Føroyar are doing great work to clean the environment however, they can not do this without volunteers. The next time you have a free day why not reach out to your local clean-up organisation and volunteer.