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One step closer to a circular economy, with expected announcements of Deposit Return Schemes across the UK

- **Drinks-related litter was found on 93% of beaches around the UK in 2022**
- **25 glass items per 100 metres found on beaches in 2022 by charity's volunteers**
- **In 2022, drinks-related litter featured in the top five most common items for each country**

Tomorrow, announcements are expected for Deposit Return Schemes in England and Wales, due to be implemented by 2025.

The [Marine Conservation Society's](#) long-running Great British Beach Clean has consistently recorded high levels of drinks-related pollution. Drinks-related litter was found on 93% of beaches around the UK (including glass and plastic bottles, cans, caps and lids) in 2022.

The charity welcomes progress to reduce pollution levels across the UK.

Deposit Return Schemes would see aluminium cans, plastic bottles and lids returnable to retailers across the UK, with the inclusion of glass only currently proposed for Scotland and Wales. Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme will be implemented in August this year.

Deposit Return Schemes are an effective illustration of how a fully circular economy would function. Consumers pay a small deposit on top of the price of a drink, which is then refunded when the bottle or can is returned to a designated destination (including over the counter). Positive impacts would include higher quality recycling, moving the financial burden from local authorities to producers and less drinks-related litter in the environment.

Results from the Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean 2022 revealed drinks-related litter featured in the top five most common items for each country and came sixth overall for the UK.

Sandy Luk, Chief Executive of the Marine Conservation Society said: "It's great to see steps being taken toward the implementation of Deposit Return Schemes across England and Wales. Our data consistently shows the need for Schemes that encompass all drinks-related litter, including glass.

"What's more, we know schemes like this work. Following the introduction of charges on single-use plastic carrier bags we saw a massive decrease in bags on beaches. Deposit Return Schemes across the UK have the potential to really turn the tide on the pollution our volunteers are finding on beaches."

Scotland is leading the way by including glass in its Deposit Return Scheme, with the Welsh Government's announcement looking like it will follow suit. England's proposed scheme is expected not to include glass.

Calum Duncan, Head of Conservation Scotland for the Marine Conservation Society

said: "We're delighted that the Welsh Government is expected to develop a deposit return scheme that includes plastic, glass bottles and metal cans, matching the ambition of the Scottish scheme. However, we are concerned that glass may be excluded from the English system, and potentially from Northern Ireland too.

"The best outcome for our environment, and ocean, would be for schemes across the nations that work together, and all include glass."

The Marine Conservation Society, along with other environmental groups, have also raised concerns about the proposed timeframe of implementation of the Schemes across all UK nations. While Scotland's Scheme is due to come into effect in August this year, the other nations have until 2025 to set plans in motion. The charity, working alongside its dedicated volunteers, will continue to clear and track pollution on UK beaches in the meantime.

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Notes to Editors

In their [2019 manifesto](#), the Conservative party promised a Deposit Return Scheme including glass. Here's their commitment in full: "We will crack down on the waste and carelessness that destroys our natural environment and kills marine life. We will increase penalties for fly-tipping, make those on community sentences clean up their parks and streets, and introduce a deposit return scheme to incentivise people to recycle plastic and glass."

The Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean found Glass items (other) consistently in the top 10 litter items in England since 2001. In recent years - #5 in 2020, #8 in 2021 and #3 in 2022.

The [Marine Conservation Society](#) is the UK's leading ocean charity, fighting for cleaner, better-protected, healthier seas. The charity works to highlight the importance of our ocean, and the life within it, through working with government, industry and education, to take action to restore and protect the marine environment.