



Image: Tracy Reynolds on Unsplash

### Example 6-month plan for working with the environment

The Big Seaweed Search is a scientific research project run by the Marine Conservation Society and the Natural History Museum. By recording the distribution of 14 seaweed species on UK shores, it helps us monitor the effects of environmental change on Britain’s sea life.

This plan is an example of how you could take part in the Big Seaweed Search as part of your DofE award. Remember to discuss with your assessor how to stay safe while doing this activity. **Please note we cannot act as Assessors for your award.** Please see the advice on choosing an assessor on the DofE website.

Thank you for contributing to this globally-important dataset. Good luck!

| Month | Activity  | Example evidence   |
|-------|---|--|
| 1     | <p><b>Prepare for your Big Seaweed Search</b></p> <p><b>Research the steps involved</b><br/>Head to our dedicated <a href="#">Big Seaweed Search page</a> to find out about the steps involved.</p> <p>Download your guide and recording form at <a href="http://www.bigseaweedsearch.org/take-part">www.bigseaweedsearch.org/take-part</a>.</p> <p><b>Practise taking photos</b><br/>Photographs are very important in this project - you must include at least one photo of each seaweed you find for the team to be able to check and accept your data. Taking clear, close-up photographs of seaweed can be difficult. Practise taking good-quality close ups so you know that your data will be as useful as possible. Look at the <a href="#">Guide to taking photos</a> for helpful hints and advice.</p> <p><b>Choose your survey areas</b><br/>You will survey a different part of the shore each week for four months, which means that you’ll need about 18 locations. Each survey area should be a five-metre wide plot running from the top of the shore down to the sea. (No need</p> | <p>Activity log<br/>Diary<br/>Research notes</p> <p>Practice photos</p> <p>Map of survey areas</p> |

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for a tape measure – five metres is approximately five adult paces.)

Have a look in the [guide](#) for advice on the type of areas to survey. On a map, draw the locations of your survey areas. You could take photographs as references.

### **Carry out a risk assessment**

Use the safety guidelines in the guide and the help of your assessor to write a risk checklist so you stay safe when you're surveying.

Risk checklist

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## **2 to 5 Conduct your Big Seaweed Search**

Each week, survey a different part of the shore you identified, using the [recording form](#) to log what you collect. Ideally, take photos of the seaweed species with your back to the sea.

Activity log

Diary

Recording sheets

Photos

Remember you must log your findings at [www.bigseaweedsearch.org/data-entry](http://www.bigseaweedsearch.org/data-entry) for them to be included in the research project. If you register for an account you will be able to review your findings.

If you share any images on social media, please tag [@NHM\\_London](#) and [@mcsuk](#) and use [#SeaweedSearch](#).

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## **6 Campaign about climate change**

Changes in the amounts, types and locations of seaweeds are indicators of climate change. They act as a sort of warning system for ocean acidification (the sea becoming more acidic as a result of absorbing carbon dioxide from the air) and ocean warming.

Activity log

Diary

Campaign materials

Photos

Take action to raise awareness of climate change and practical actions. For example:

- Run an energy-saving campaign in your street, community or at school
- Encourage walking/cycling/use of public transport
- Run a refuse and reuse campaign
- Work with the school caterers to reduce the carbon footprint of lunch menus
- Petition your local council to reduce their carbon footprint
- Write to your MP about rewilding the sea and increasing the number of Marine Protected Areas.

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### **Evaluation**

Reflect on what went well and what could be improved. You could create a list of dos and don'ts to be used by other DofE participants.

Evaluation notes  
Dos and don'ts

Take a moment to celebrate your achievement. You have contributed vital baseline information that is helping scientists to understand the impact of climate change, ocean acidification and non-native seaweeds on our shores.

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### **Thank you!**

Thank you for contributing to this important research project. Find out about more ways you can work with us to save our seas at [mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do](https://mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do)