

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 13.00 on Friday 15th of May 2026.

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STARTS...

EMBARGOED: 95 Blue Flags and 73 Green Coast Awards awarded in 2026

2026 Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards Recognise Ireland's Best Beaches and Marinas

For strictly embargoed release 13.00 Friday 15th May 2026: Today, Friday 15th May, 2026 An Taisce are proud to announce the International Blue Flag and National Green Coast Award recipients for 2026. The awards were presented by An Taisce at a ceremony hosted by Cork County Council in Mall House, Youghal, County Cork this afternoon.

Speaking at the ceremony hosted by Cork County Council in Mall House, Youghal, Tracey Lydon, Head of Operational Projects, Education & Community Action at An Taisce said:

"We are pleased to be welcomed to East Cork, to recognise the beaches, marinas and tourism boat awarded the Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards for the 2026 season. The local authorities, Clean Coasts groups, marina operators, and tourism boat operator responsible for their management have committed considerable effort to ensure that these sites and boat meet the high standards required by The Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards. I would like to extend my congratulations to all the award recipients on their achievements and to express my gratitude on behalf of An Taisce to Cork County Council for hosting us here in Youghal, the home of two Blue Flag beaches on this occasion."

Minister for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity Christopher O'Sullivan, TD, said:

"These awards are testament to the hard work of local authorities and local communities around the country to keep our coastal areas clean. The Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised environmental awards and I'm proud to see so many Irish beaches and marinas receive this status today. Those who receive this award have demonstrated high standards around water quality, biodiversity protection and have shown strong collaboration with local tourism service providers to lead the way in sustainable coastal management".

Summary of Awards

A total of 168 awards were presented today, just one fewer than last year's record-breaking total, with 146 beaches receiving awards, along with one tourism boat, and 9 marinas. This year 12 beaches have been presented with both a Blue Flag and a Green Coast Award, achieving dual award status, and bringing the overall total to 168 awards altogether. These sites are Balcarrick, Donabate in Fingal; Salthill and Silver Strand in Galway City, An Trá, Inis Oirr in Galway County; Inchydoney Beach East in Cork; Baile an Sceilg (Ballinskelligs) in Kerry; Bettystown in Meath; Enniscrone and Rosses Point in Sligo and Bunmahon, Tramore, and Clonea in Waterford. County Kerry has been awarded with the most Blue Flags in 2026 while Cork received the most Green Coast Awards in 2026, with 13 and has also the highest combined number of awards with 25.

Blue Flag

The Blue Flag Award is one of the world's most recognised environmental awards. Originating in France in 1985 it was launched as an International programme as part of the "European Year of the Environment" in 1987. In 1988, the first year sites were awarded outside of France, 19 beaches and 2 marinas received the Blue Flag in Ireland. 2026 marks

the 39th year that beaches and marinas have been awarded Blue Flag Awards here in Ireland, with 95 beaches, marinas and tourism boats being awarded for the 2026 season.

The programme aims to raise environmental awareness and promote sound environmental management of beaches, marinas and eco-tourism boats around the world. The 85 Irish beaches, 9 marinas and the Skellig Bounty, the first tourism boat to be awarded a Blue Flag in Ireland that have achieved this accolade must adhere to specific criteria in the areas of water quality, waste management, biodiversity protection, education, information, safety, and accessibility, helping participating destinations and tourism service providers lead the way in sustainable coastal management.

Blue Flags Awarded in Ireland in 2026

Overall, 85 beaches around Ireland have been awarded a Blue Flag for the 2026 bathing season, which runs from June 1st to September 15th. Additionally, 9 marinas have been awarded for up to 12 months from June 1st, 2026, based on their season of operation and compliance with the award criteria, and one tourism boat has received a Blue Flag Award for the first time in Blue Flag history in Ireland.

Blue Flag Award in numbers:

- Duncannon Beach in County Wexford has been awarded a Blue Flag for the first time since 2007.
- Bunmahon beach in County Waterford has been awarded a Blue Flag for the first time since 2012.
- Both Duncannon and Bunmahon beaches have been awarded in part due to a significant improvement of in-season bathing water quality over the most recent assessment period, 2022 to 2025.
- Skellig Bounty, operated by Aqua Terra Boat Tours on Valentia Island in Co. Kerry, Ireland's first Blue Flag awarded tourism boat has been awarded a Blue Flag for 12 months from June 1st 2026.
- Kerry was awarded the most Blue Flags in 2026 with a total of 16 flags awarded, of these 14 are managed by Kerry County Council. Additionally, Portmagee Marina is managed by Kilrush Maritime Ltd, and Skellig Bounty operated out of Knightstown, Valentia Island is managed by Aqua Terra Boat Tours.
- Six beaches that were awarded the Blue Flag in 2025 have not been awarded in 2026, these are: Lahinch, in County Clare; Fountainstown, in County Cork; Portsalon in County Donegal; Ardmore Beach and Counsellors' Strand, Dunmore East in County Waterford; and Ballymoney, North Beach in Wexford. Having failed to achieve an 'Excellent' classification over the latest evaluation period, 2022 to 2025, none of these beaches met the water quality standard required to be awarded a Blue Flag for the coming bathing season. All of these beaches attained a water quality classification of Good, the second highest classification possible under the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008.
- 85 out of 153 identified bathing waters in Ireland have been awarded a Blue Flag for the 2026 bathing season, or 55% of Ireland's identified bathing waters.
- One marina awarded in 2025, Greencastle Marina was not awarded in 2026, there was no Blue Flag application from Greencastle Marina for 2026.

An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland is responsible for the operation of the Blue Flag programme in Ireland on behalf of the Foundation of Environmental Education (FEE). Overall, 53 Countries operate the Blue Flag programme globally and more than 5,200 beaches, marinas and tourism boats will be awarded the Blue Flag this year. The Blue Flag programme in Ireland is supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Green Coast Award: A record-setting 73 Beaches receive the Green Coast Award for the 2026 Bathing Season

The Green Coast Award recognises beaches for their clean environment, excellent water quality and natural beauty. Green Coast Award sites are exceptional places to visit and enjoy our rich coastal heritage and diversity.

An important aspect of the Green Coast Awards is the involvement of voluntary Clean Coasts groups, who participate in community clean-ups and help manage the applicant beaches in cooperation with Local Authorities. The main purpose of the Green Coast Award programme is to foster partnerships within communities in effort to protect and enhance local coastal environs, and to celebrate the efforts of those communities.

The first Green Coast Awards were presented to four beaches in Wexford in 2003. The award was rolled out nationally in 2008 and has gone from strength to strength ever since. In Ireland the Green Coast Award is operated by An Taisce with the support of the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment and Fáilte Ireland.

Green Coast Award in numbers:

- A total of 73 beaches are being presented with The Green Coast Award today, the highest total awarded to date.
- Cork received the most Green Coast Awards in 2026, with a total of 13 beaches being awarded.
- Cork has also been the highest combined number of award flags with an overall total of 25, including the Blue Flags awarded to Kinsale Yacht Club and The Royal Cork Yacht Club.
- Wexford and Waterford have been awarded the second most with 10 Green Coast Award beaches each.
- Waterford has the most first-time Green Coast Award beaches in 2026 with 4, with additional Green Coast Award flags to fly over Bummahon, Clonea, Tramore and Whiting Bay for the 2026 bathing season. Tramore and Clonea have also been awarded the Blue Flag this year.
- In relation to Grange in County Wexford, cliff stabilization works at Grange Beach have been required at two locations, resulting in temporary restrictions on public access. Although work at one site has been completed, works at the second site is ongoing. The projected completion date for these essential projects, which aim to ensure continued public access, is currently scheduled for the first week of July. Grange has been designated as a Green Coast Award site for the 2026 season; however, the award flag cannot be flown at the beach until all works are completed and the beach has been reopened to the public.

ENDS...

EDITORS NOTES:

For more information on Blue Flag award programme in Ireland visit: [Blue Flag Ireland](#)

For more information on Blue Flag beach water quality requirements visit: [The Blue Flag and Water Quality](#)

For more information on the Green Coast Award programme visit: [Green Coast Award](#)

Maps of Awarded Beaches and Marinas:

Blue Flag: [Awarded Beaches, Marinas and Tourism Boat 2026](#)

Green Coast Award: [Awarded Beaches 2026](#)

Media queries to: Ian Diamond, Coastal Awards Manager, An Taisce blueflag@eeu.antaisce.org

Please see the full lists of Blue Flag and Green Coast Award recipients below:

95 Blue Flag Beaches, Marinas and Tourism Boat Awarded 2026

85 Blue Flag Beaches awarded for 2026 bathing season, June 1st to September 15th 2026

#	Management Body	Beach Awarded
1	Clare County Council	Ballycuggeran
2	Clare County Council	Cappagh Pier
3	Clare County Council	Fanore
4	Clare County Council	Kilkee
5	Clare County Council	Mountshannon, Lough Derg
6	Clare County Council	Spanish Point
7	Clare County Council	White Strand Doonbeg
8	Clare County Council	White Strand Miltown Malbay
9	Cork County Council	Barley Cove
10	Cork County Council	Garretstown
11	Cork County Council	Garrylucas, White Strand
12	Cork County Council	Inchydoney East Beach
13	Cork County Council	Inchydoney West Beach
14	Cork County Council	Owenahincha, Little Island Strand
15	Cork County Council	Redbarn Beach
16	Cork County Council	Tragumna
17	Cork County Council	Youghal Front Strand
18	Cork County Council	Youghal, Claycastle
19	Donegal County Council	Bundoran
20	Donegal County Council	Carrickfinn
21	Donegal County Council	Culdaff
22	Donegal County Council	Downings
23	Donegal County Council	Fintra
24	Donegal County Council	Killahoey
25	Donegal County Council	Marble Hill
26	Donegal County Council	Murvagh
27	Donegal County Council	Narin
28	Donegal County Council	Rossnowlagh
29	Donegal County Council	Stroove
30	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Killiney
31	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Seapoint
32	Fingal County Council	Donabate, Balcarrick Beach
33	Fingal County Council	Velvet Strand, Portmarnock
34	Galway City Council	Salthill Beach
35	Galway City Council	Silverstrand Beach
36	Galway County Council	An Trá Mór, Coill Rua, Indreabháin
37	Galway County Council	Bathing Place at Portumna
38	Galway County Council	Céibh an Spidéal
39	Galway County Council	Cill Mhuirbhígh, Inis Mór
40	Galway County Council	Loughrea Lake

41	Galway County Council	Trá an Doilin, An Ceathrá Rua
42	Galway County Council	Trá Inis Óírr
43	Galway County Council	Traught Kinvara
44	Kerry County Council	Baile an Sceilg (Ballinskelligs)
45	Kerry County Council	Ballybunion North
46	Kerry County Council	Ballybunion South
47	Kerry County Council	Ballyheigue
48	Kerry County Council	Banna Strand
49	Kerry County Council	Doire Fíonáin (Derrynane)
#	Management Body	Beach Awarded
50	Kerry County Council	Fenit
51	Kerry County Council	Fionntrá (Ventry)
52	Kerry County Council	Inch
53	Kerry County Council	Kells
54	Kerry County Council	Maherabeg
55	Kerry County Council	Rossbeigh
56	Kerry County Council	White Strand, Caherciveen
57	Louth County Council	Clogherhead
58	Louth County Council	Port, Lurganboy
59	Louth County Council	Templetown - Shellig Hill
60	Mayo County Council	Bertra Beach, Murrisk
61	Mayo County Council	Clare Island, Louisburgh
62	Mayo County Council	Dooega Beach, Achill Island
63	Mayo County Council	Dugort Beach, Achill Island
64	Mayo County Council	Elly Bay, Belmullet
65	Mayo County Council	Keel Beach, Achill Island
66	Mayo County Council	Keem Beach, Achill Island
67	Mayo County Council	Mullaghroe Beach, Belmullet
68	Mayo County Council	Mulranny Beach
69	Mayo County Council	Old Head
70	Mayo County Council	Ross Beach, Killala
71	Meath County Council	Bettystown
72	Sligo County Council	Enniscrone
73	Sligo County Council	Rosses Point Beach
74	Waterford City and County Council	Bunmahon
75	Waterford City and County Council	Clonea Beach
76	Waterford City and County Council	Tramore Beach
77	Wexford County Council	Ballinesker Beach
78	Wexford County Council	Carne
79	Wexford County Council	Curracloe
80	Wexford County Council	Duncannon
81	Wexford County Council	Morriscastle Beach
82	Wexford County Council	Rosslare Strand
83	Wicklow County Council	Brittas Bay North Beach

84	Wicklow County Council	Brittas Bay South Beach
85	Wicklow County Council	Greystones South Beach

9 Blue Flag Marinas, Awarded for the period June 1st 2026 to May 31st 2027

#	Management Body	Marina Awarded
1	Donegal County Council	Rathmullan
2	Kerry County Council	Fenit marina
3	Kilrush Maritime	Kilrush Marina
4	Kilrush Maritime	Portmagee Marina
5	Kinsale Yacht Club	KYC
6	Quigleys Marina	Quigleys, Killinure Point Marina
7	Royal Cork Yacht Club	RCYC
8	Wexford County Council	Kilmore Quay Marina
9	Wexford County Council	New Ross Marina

Tourism Boat, Awarded The Blue Flag for the period June 1st 2026 to May 31st 2027

#	Management Body	Boat Awarded
1	Aqua Terra Boat Tours	Skellig Bounty

73 beaches awarded the Green Coast Award for the 2026 bathing season, June 1st to September 15th 2026

#	Local Authority Area	Beach Awarded
1	Clare	Ballallia Lake
2	Clare	Bishop's Quarter
3	Clare	Carrigaholt Beach
4	Clare	Seafield
5	Clare	Quilty
6	Cork	Red Strand
7	Cork	Ardnahinch
8	Cork	Ballynamona
9	Cork	Ballyrisode
10	Cork	Cadogan's Strand
11	Cork	Dooneen Pier
12	Cork	Galley Cove
13	Cork	Garnish Beach
14	Cork	Inchydoney East
15	Cork	Oysterhaven
16	Cork	Ring
17	Cork	Rockey Bay
18	Cork	Silver Strand, Sherkin Island
19	Donegal	Ballyheirnan
20	Donegal	Dooley Beach
21	Donegal	Drumnatinney
22	Donegal	Magheroarty Beach
23	Donegal	Port Arthur
24	Fingal	Balcarrick, Donabate

25	Galway City	Salthill
26	Galway City	Silver Strand
27	Galway County	Silver Hill/Aillebrack
28	Galway County	Dumhach Beach
29	Galway County	East End Bay Inishbofin
30	Galway County	Renvyle Beach
31	Galway County	An Tra Inis Oirr
32	Galway County	Tra Poll na gCaorach, Inis Oirr
33	Kerry	Ballinskelligs
34	Kerry	Beal Ban
35	Kerry	Waterville
36	Kerry	Castlegregory
37	Kerry	Littor
38	Louth	Seapoint
39	Mayo	Carrowniskey Beach
40	Mayo	Cross, Erris Peninsula
41	Mayo	Rinroe
42	Mayo	Srah Beach
43	Mayo	Termon Beach
44	Mayo	Tranaun, Inishturk
45	Mayo	Cross Loisburgh
46	Mayo	Portacloy beach
47	Mayo	Goldren Strand, Achill
48	Meath	Bettystown
49	Meath	Mornington
50	Sligo	Enniscrone
51	Sligo	Dunmorán Strand
52	Sligo	Rosses Point
53	Sligo	Streedagh
54	Waterford	Balyquin
55	Waterford	Curragh
56	Waterford	Goat Island
57	Waterford	Guillamene Cove
58	Waterford	Kilfarassey
59	Waterford	Newtown Cove
60	Waterford	Bunmahon
61	Waterford	Clonea
62	Waterford	Tramore
63	Waterford	Whiting Bay
64	Wexford	Ballyhealy
65	Wexford	Booley Bay
66	Wexford	Cahore Point
67	Wexford	Cullenstown
68	Wexford	Grange
69	Wexford	Rosslare Harbour

70	Wexford	Culleton's Gap
71	Wexford	Old Bawn Beach
72	Wexford	Baginbun
73	Wicklow	Arklow South Beach

Summary of changes in award numbers by Local Authority Area 2026

Local Authority Area	Management Body	Blue Flags awarded in 2026	Change in Total Blue Flags awarded 2026 vs. 2025	Green Coast Awards 2026	Change in Total Green Coast Award beaches 2026 vs. 2025	Total Awards 2026
Clare	Clare County Council	8	-1	5	0	13
Clare	Kilrush Marina managed by Kilrush Maritime Ltd	1	No change	N/A	N/A	1
Cork County	Cork County Council	10	-1	13	-1	23
	Kinsale Yacht Club	1	No change	N/A	N/A	1
	Royal Cork Yacht Club	1	No change	N/A	N/A	1
Donegal	Donegal County Council	12	-2	5	No change	17
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	2	No change	0	No change	2
Fingal	Fingal County Council	2	No change	1	No change	3
Galway City Council	Galway City Council	2	No change	2	No change	4
Galway County	Galway County Council	8	No change	6	No change	14
Kerry	Kerry County Council	14	No change	5	No change	19
	Portmagee Marina managed by Kilrush Maritime Ltd.	1	No change	N/A	N/A	1
	"Skellig Bounty" operated by Aqua Terra Boat Tours	1	+1	N/A	N/A	1

Local Authority Area	Management Body	Blue Flags awarded in 2026	Change in Total Blue Flags awarded 2026 vs. 2025	Green Coast Awards 2026	Change in Total Green Coast Award beaches 2026 vs. 2025	Total Awards 2026
Louth	Louth County Council	3	No change	1	No change	3
Mayo	Mayo County Council	11	No change	9	No change	20
Meath	Meath County Council	1	No change	2	No change	3
Sligo	Sligo County Council	2	No change	4	No change	6
Waterford City and County	Waterford City and County Council	3	-1	10	+4	13
Wexford	Wexford County Council	7	No change	9	No change	16
Wicklow	Wicklow County Council	3	No change	1	+1	4
Westmeath	Quigleys, Killinure Point Marina	1	No change	N/A	N/A	1

Where to find us:

WEBSITES:

Blue Flag: <https://beachawards.ie/blue-flag/>

Green Coast: <https://beachawards.ie/green-coast/>

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