

Coastal Erosion: Protecting Ireland's Beaches and Dunes

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Coastal erosion is a slow process as winter high tides take a few more feet into the sea every year.

However, if climate change is not tackled we could see a sudden increase in the rate of coastal erosion in the years to come.

Every year coastal sand dunes across Ireland are undermined.

Frontal sections collapse and are then swept into the sea.

At Corballis Beach in Donabate large sections collapsed in December, 2012.



Corballis Beach at high tide on December 14, 2012



Corballis Beach on Sunday 30 December, 2012



Corballis Beach on Sunday 30 December, 2012. Most damaged section.



Corballis Beach on Sunday 30 December, 2012. Height of the most damaged section.

The most damaged section had a 'cliff face' of at least 3 metres in height showing the amount of dune that has been lost to high tides. According to Derek Evans, writing in a [letter](#) to The Irish Times on December 11, 2012, about a nearby beach, Portrane:

"Up to 10 metres of sand dunes spanning almost 1,000 metres of coastline have been lost at Portrane beach in Co Dublin due to coastal erosion. Lifeguard signposts, access points and fencing have collapsed and the scene today is one of destruction and devastation."

Evans calls on Fingal County Council to reinforce the most vulnerable areas of the beach or the dunes will be gone in less than five years. He further states that

"Portrane beach was one of only four beaches in the Fingal County Council region to be awarded Blue Flag status this year [Corballis also got the Blue Flag in 2012] for its excellent water quality, environmental education, management of the environment and safety."

It is ironic that at the point at which these environmental aspects are finally being dealt with, the very structure of the beach is being seriously challenged.

If measures are not taken soon, Corballis, too, will soon have no dunes worth speaking about.

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