



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Irish
Ocean
Literacy
Network

Green-Schools

NATIONAL MARINE CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2025

MY OCEAN



FOREWORD

I am thrilled to celebrate the fifth year of the annual Green-Schools National Marine Creative Writing Competition. The competition has become a true highlight of the Green-Schools calendar year, and we are continuously blown away by the wonderful talent and imagination of the young writers who enter the competition.

This year, the competition explored the theme of “My Ocean”, and we received over two-hundred wonderful entries, from stories about how we can help to reduce marine pollution in our ocean, to poems about the comfort we can find on a deeply personal level, by spending time by the sea and in nature.

Well done to all who entered the competition and a huge congratulations to the extremely talented young writers included in this anthology. Keep up the fantastic work, both in your writing career and in being a voice for the environment.

Joanne Scott,
Green-Schools National Manager



Green-Schools

National Marine Creative Writing Competition 2025

“My Ocean”

Green-Schools are delighted to celebrate the fifth annual National Marine Creative Writing Competition, which is proudly supported by the Marine Environment section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Each year, we receive hundreds of wonderful poems and short stories, showcasing the imagination and talent of Ireland’s young writers, and their passion for the marine environment.

This year, the competition’s theme was chosen to support the Irish Ocean Literacy Network’s “My Ocean” campaign, which aims to collect personal accounts and experiences from the people of Ireland, regarding their relationship with the ocean and coast.

We received entries which explored the writer’s personal connection to the ocean, we received poems about how we are polluting our ocean and stories about the beauty of the ocean. In this anthology, you can read the top twelve competition entries which were carefully chosen from the two-hundred and forty-one fantastic submissions received. We hope you enjoy “My Ocean”!

PRIZES

The prizes for four national winners include a trophy, a €100 book token, a whale/dolphin adoption from the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group and €100 to go towards a creative writing workshop for their class, or their Green-Schools activities. There are also prizes for 2nd and 3rd place in each category! Winning entries were shared as part of Green-Schools Marine Week in April – a week of online activities celebrating our oceans!

CATEGORIES

There were four age categories for entries:

- 1st & 2nd class
- 3rd & 4th class
- 5th & 6th class
- Secondary School

JUDGES

- Catherine Gaul, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Moira Cardiff, formerly of Poetry Ireland
- Cathy Baxter, An Taisce

Winners

1st & 2nd CLASS

1st place: Aoife Murphy, Newport N.S.

2nd place: Cathal Murphy, Kilmyshall N.S.

3rd place: Abigail Duffy, Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire

3rd & 4th CLASS

1st place: Katie McCartan, Kilskyre N.S.

2nd place: Joey O’Gorman, Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire

3rd place: Annie Mae Creedon, St Mary’s Primary School

5th & 6th CLASS

1st place: Annabelle Gill, Holy Trinity N.S.

2nd place: Pola Adach, Scoil Áine

3rd place: Olivia Condren, St Gerard’s Junior School

SECONDARY SCHOOL

1st place: Constance McHugh, Rathdown School

2nd place: Róisín Mohan, Coláiste Íosagáin

3rd place: Christeena Soji, Mount Mercy College

1st & 2nd Class Category

1st Place Winner

“Down by the ocean”

Down by the ocean
Some call it the sea
I pop on my wellies
and bring my bucket with me.

I walk to the ocean,
where magic is found
with mermaids and treasure
and joy all around.

I like to collect sea shells
and dance in the foam
because in this world,
the sea is my home.

By Aoife Murphy.
Newport N.S.



1st & 2nd Class Category

2nd Place Winner

“Whale”

Why do you give me plastic?

How will I survive?

Am big.

Love to swim.

Endangered.

By Cathal Murphy.

Kilmyshall N.S.



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



1st & 2nd Class Category

3rd Place Winner

“My Ocean”

I would like to visit the ocean
the blue ocean,
the fun ocean,
the fish-filled ocean,
the noisy ocean
the wavey ocean,
the undiscovered ocean,
the splashing ocean,
the crashing ocean,
the “let’s swim around the coral reef” ocean.
Would you like to visit the ocean?

By Abigail Duffy,
Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



3rd & 4th Class Category

1st Place Winner

“My Ocean”

The ocean is the most breathtaking thing I have ever seen. It's so big, and it goes on forever! I feel so small when I stand next to it, looking at the waves crash against the shore. The water sparkles in the sunlight, and sometimes it changes colour, like blue, green, and even purple. It's magical and mysterious, like it holds so many secrets.

When I get close to the ocean, I can smell the salty air. It smells fresh and clean, like a giant, natural perfume. The smell makes me feel happy because it reminds me of the beach, where I have so much fun. Sometimes, I close my eyes and just listen to the waves. It's like a peaceful song that makes everything feel calm.

The ocean is full of life, and I think that's what makes it so special. There are so many fish swimming around in the water. Some of them are exotic, like bright tropical fish with every colour of the rainbow. I love how the ocean is so colourful, full of creatures I can't see anywhere else. If I were to dive into the water, I'd probably find even more amazing animals hiding under the surface. The coral reefs are stunning, and they look like a big underwater garden with purple, pink, and orange colours everywhere.

I love to swim in the ocean. The waves carry me, and sometimes I float on my back and look at the sky. Swimming in the ocean makes me feel free, and I always feel happy when I'm in the water. The atmosphere around the beach is so peaceful. It's like everything is calm and happy, and it's the best place to be.

The ocean is fun and beautiful. I can play in the sand, collect seashells, and even try to surf. Every time I visit the ocean, I feel like I'm part of something bigger. It's a magical place that I'll never get tired of. The ocean is one of the most amazing things in the world, and I will always love it!

**By Katie McCartan,
Kilskyre N.S.**



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



3rd & 4th Class Category

2nd Place Winner

“The Ocean’s Heart”

In the depths where silence sings
waves weave tales on gentle wings

Coral dreams in colour bright
Dance beneath the moon’s soft light

Whispers of the sea’s embrace
Cradle life in fluid grace

Endless blue
A treasure call

In the ocean’s heart
We find it all

**By Joey O’Gorman,
Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire**



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



3rd & 4th Class Category

3rd Place Winner

“My Ocean Dream” (rap)

The marine iguana, watch him in the sauna,
The red King Crab is sailing with Moana,
Sand in my shorts, yeah, that's a bad move
Now I'm walking like a crab with an attitude.

Whales in the back going OooOoo-wee!
Even Spongebob wanna chill with mee!
See the sea urchin with his tay-tay merchen
I hope he like it or I'll go searchin!
I'm a fish, I'm a shark, I'm a jellyfish too
I'm searchin' for a snack, I'm looking for you!
Perching on a rock, doing the wave
If you see me dance, you better behave! (Ha ha)

See the spotted jellyfish, I like it that way,
I hope it will not sting, I hope it will stay!
I could barely see the stonefish blending in with coral
One named Barry, the other named Carol
I could see the sea cucumber, he was a new comer
He had a hat cause he was undercover!

See the sea snakes waiting up in line
Sharks coming by getting ready to sign
Look at the whale getting his daily mail
And see the snail looking at his email
Now I wake up and tell ye all about it,
I just wanna shout it!

**By Annie Mae Creedon,
St Mary's Primary School**



5th & 6th Class Category

1st Place Winner

“My Ocean”

Beneath the waves, where silence hums,
A world of blue, where sunlight drums,
Upon the backs of drifting tides,
A place where wondrous life resides.

I dive below, my heart at peace,
Descending slow, my thoughts release.
The ocean calls in whispered tones,
Like a melody in water's bones.

Yet, as I glide through sapphire deep,
Dark truths emerge, they make me weep.
For here, where bright corals once swayed,
Lies ruin now, where beauty frayed.

A turtle twists, its flippers caught,
In plastic death that humans wrought.
A bag, once light upon the air,
Now grips its throat in strangled snare.

A dolphin cries, its sleek form thin,
Its stomach lined with waste within.
It swallows deep the poisoned scraps,
And fades beneath the world's collapse.

The fish once shone in vibrant hues,
Now chokes on oil, dissolving in ooze.
The seagrass wilts in blackened stains,
The ocean chokes, it writhes in pain.

A bottle drifts where seahorse played,
A net where silver minnows swayed.
A reef now dull with lifeless stone,
A graveyard where no love is sown.



Once vibrant gardens, lush and wide,
Now ghosts of what they were inside.
The corals bleach, their colours fade,
Like memories lost in time's cascade.

And yet the waves still dance above,
Still whisper songs of endless love.
As if they hide the cries below,
A broken world they dare not show.

I reach to free a tangled fin,
A silent plea to heal within.
Yet hands alone cannot erase,
The scars we leave upon this place.

For every bottle, bag, and net,
Is mankind's love—the world's regret.
The greed, the waste, the careless hands,
That steal the life from sacred lands.

The ocean weeps, yet still she fights,
Her heart still beats through darkest nights.
Her tides still rise, her waters call,
A wounded giant standing tall.

She whispers still, though faint and weak,
Through breaking waves, her voice will speak.
If we but choose to hear her pain,
We still have time, we can remain.

For every shore, each grain of sand,
Still holds the touch of nature's hand.
Each wave that breaks upon the land,
Still sings the song of what was planned.

I rise again, lungs filled with grief,
The waves embrace but bring no relief.
For now, my eyes will always see,
The truth beneath this endless sea.



Yet hope still gleams in waters deep,
If we but wake from this careless sleep.
To change, to save, to make amends,
Before this tale of life ends.

So hear the ocean's mournful cries,
And see the sorrow in her eyes.
For what we've lost can still return,
If only we begin to learn.

If hands once used to take and tear,
Could start to heal, rebuild, repair,
Then life may bloom, the seas may thrive,
And all that's lost may yet survive.

**By Annabelle Gill,
Holy Trinity N.S.**



5th & 6th Class Category

2nd Place Winner

“The Deep Dark Blue”

My Grandfather, sitting comfortably in his leather armchair,
Would take a long, deep breath of the cold, lighthouse air.
Then he'd tell me stories, strange ones too.
About what he had met in the deep dark blue.

He would tell me about a place made up of coral shells and sand,
That lies in a magical place in a magical land.
Time and rules work differently there,
No one ages and troubles are rare.

Dragons, Mermaids, silkies and giant octopi,
Live peacefully together, like in a lullaby.
“You would never be able to find this place,” he would say.
“As it's protected by an old ancient spell.” I could listen to his tales all day.

That's why creatures that do not want to be seen by the human eye,
Hide away down there, in the Deep Dark Blue they lie.
Things people thought couldn't possibly exist,
Things like kelpies and siren songs you couldn't resist.

All of these creatures, in the ocean, have a place.
Ask a scientist though, they'll say there's no proof of this place, not a trace.

He would always get me at the edge of my seat,
Listening to him was like a special treat.
And when I asked, “Grandfather, have you ever seen such a creature?” he would say,
“Now my love! That's a tale for another day!”

**By Pola Adach,
Scoil Áine**



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Secondary School Category

1st Place Winner

“My Own, Personal Ocean”

The ocean is a truly gargantuan body of water;
She envelops over 70% of the Earth's surface in all her aquatic glory.
I share her with 8.2 billion people.
Or at least, that's what Google tells me.
But her magnitude and ubiquity
Is hard to comprehend
When, all my life,
The ocean has seemed like my own personal habitat, my companion.
My ocean.

Wherever I go, the ocean follows me;
She's a comforting presence, almost never too far behind.
On the rare occasion that she is, and I am in
One of those strange, landlocked places
Where she is nowhere to be seen, things feel off.
Where is she? Every fibre of my being calls out. Where is
My oldest friend, my dearest sister,
My ocean.

Needless to say, her absence on the horizon is felt.

She is the backdrop to my best memories.
And when I make the journey to reunite with her for a swim,
And when I crash into her blue-grey-green waves,
And when I feel her rush around me in a cold blanket,
She washes everything else away.
I tell her my secrets while she takes away my worries
(the number of which seem to have increased,
exponentially,
upon every visit).
Her coldness numbs my brain,
Gives me relief.
She's my one constant, my confidante.
My ocean.



Curled up in a scratchy towel
On the rocks at the seafront in Seapoint,
I listen to her slow breathing,
In, out, in, out.

Swash, backwash, over rocks and debris
And abandoned buckets and spades.
She doesn't complain about the things
That get in her way, but simply
Takes them in her stride, too powerful
To even notice them.

Maybe I should take a leaf out of her book –
Become carefree, relaxed, spontaneous, unstoppable;

Become my own ocean.

**By Constance McHugh,
Rathdown School**



Secondary School Category

2nd Place Winner

“I will claim my ocean”

Whether it is the wind that will take me
The waves that will break me
Or the current that will shake me
I will claim it

Whether it is the sun that shines upon me
The breeze that blows past me
Or the tide that drifts down towards me
I will claim it

Whether it be the water that surrounds me
The bitter cold that fills my bones
Or the blue sky that splits the landscape
I will claim it

It won't turn its back on me
I won't let it take from me,
My freedom, my wisdom, my curiosity
I know what the future holds for me
In turn a chance it will give to me
To follow my heart and what belongs to me

In my soul I feel it deep
It reaches out for me to speak
The truth in toll will provide an answer
To the question beneath the surface

As the sunset cracks on the horizon
This vision pours into my mind
An image of peace and tranquility
To live like the creatures below the water



My inner freedom at last
It calls out to me
Imploring me to follow
The path to my serenity

They tell us to stop littering
To clean our shores
To save the turtles
And remove plastic from our homes
But as well as all of that
I will let the ocean speak to me
And let it tell me what to do

When the time comes for me to leap at the chance
I will grab what holds my heart
It's cold fingers will grip my arm and guide me towards my ocean
I will claim it

A chance to name it my own
And restore what once was mine
I will claim my ocean

**By Réisín Mohan,
Coláiste Íosagáin, Portarlinton**



Secondary School Category

3rd Place Winner

“My Ocean”

My Beloved Ocean.

A soft beam of glistening light awakens me from my slumber, a sleep I'd wish to last forever. I look around the shimmering ocean highlighted by the golden rays of the sun. I slowly rise off my tattered raft, struggling to keep my balance, my weak body betrays me, A sudden wave throws me off and into the ocean. At first I fought, with all my might hoping this wasn't the end of my story, at last I let myself go, accepting my wretched fate, and then.. It hits me, something so strong forces me to open my eyes, it forces me to stay alive. My eyes flutter open to a sight like no other, crystal clear waters, with all sorts of wonders. It was like nature's piece of art.

I'm losing air quickly, but want to explore further, I have this insane determination in me. As I rush to take a breath of fresh clean air, I spot vibrant fishes swirling around me, blue, green, orange. The deeper I go down the more magnificent the surroundings are. Families of fishes, floating jellyfish drifting along the currents, ancient shells moving gracefully through the waters, their elegant movements like those of a ballet, pancake-like bodies gliding through the water with flexible tails and sensational patterns that camouflage them into the ocean floors. Oh how I took these enchanting sights for granted!

Going in further I witness a ghastly scene, a crumbling shipwreck, its intricate framework barely recognizable. There is something so secretive about it, like it had a story to tell, one that was adventurous and daring yet sorrowful. Alongside it, skeletal remains rest in the sandy seabed half-buried. A skull stares back at me intensely, hollow and cracked, its empty eye sockets sunken deep into the abyss. It makes me ponder upon those who have lost their lives to the mighty waves, their remains scattered across the abandoned, vast, profound...



Frantically I kick against the grips of seaweed that are now clawing onto my legs. The pressure of the water beginning to surge around me, my hands weak, arms falling. I can hear my own heart beat, I want to live now. My lungs are starving of air, the water getting thicker. I'm too enervated to resist. I feel remorseful but reflective of my final adventure. The water crawls into my lungs, suffocating me. But then.. the ocean seems to be carrying me towards the surface, its waves gentle and caring as if I was in mothers hands. I open my eyes to a faint blur. I see the vibrant blue sky, eternal and ever changing. It builds a fierce desire in me. My eyes fill with tears, as I take a glorious breath. The air is fresh and sweet. Maybe, just maybe I can start again. This is my ocean, and I am ever so grateful for it.

**By Christeena Soji,
Mount Mercy College**



Congratulations to all
the winners and well
done to everyone who
entered this year's
competition!

– Green-Schools Marine Team



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage





Green-Schools Ireland,
An Taisce,
5 Foster Place,
Temple Bar,
Dublin 2

Tel: 01 4002222
Email: info@greenschoolsireland.org
www.greenschoolsireland.org



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Green-Schools supports the
Sustainable Development Goals