



# FACT SHEETS!

## THE RIVER LAGAN

### THE HISTORY OF THE LAGAN AND BELFAST

The River Lagan is a river in Northern Ireland which runs for 40 miles from the Slieve Croob Mountain in County Down to Belfast where it enters Belfast Lough, an inlet of the Irish Sea.

**FACT!**

The River Lagan forms the border between County Antrim and County Down.

**FACT!**

The Lagan towpath is a pathway which runs from Lisburn to the centre of Belfast.

The Lagan has played a key role in the city. At the beginning of the 19th century, along with the Industrial Revolution, Belfast changed from a small town to a major world-recognised port. Industries such as shipbuilding, linen, rope making and tobacco blossomed.

The Lagan Weir was completed in 1994 at a cost of £14 million. The weir is a series of massive steel barriers which are raised as low tide approaches, to control the level of the water.

### WILDLIFE ON THE RIVER LAGAN

As the quality of the water in the Lagan has improved more wildlife has returned. An aeration system installed in the river cleanses the water and has increased the amount of fish. This has resulted in a thriving community of birds, seals, insects and plants. More people are also using and visiting the river and the surrounding area than ever before.



# FACT SHEETS!

## THE EFFECT LITTER HAS ON THE RIVER LAGAN AND THE WORLD

Unfortunately with more people using the Lagan, more litter is being found in the river and along the riverbanks.

### **FACT!**

Litter doesn't stay where it is dropped. It can be moved by rivers, tides, currents and winds. Currents between the oceans of the world cause litter to be moved around the whole planet.

### **FACT!**

Man-made litter can look like natural food items and many species are known to eat litter which can be fatal.

## WHAT TYPES OF LITTER CAN BE FOUND IN THE RIVER LAGAN?

Everything you can think of can be found in the Lagan such as bottles, cans and shopping trolleys to more unusual items like Christmas trees, false teeth and kitchen sinks.

## DANGEROUS LITTER

Have you ever been to a balloon release and watched as the balloons float up into the air? What happens to those balloons? Do they magically disappear? Do they biodegrade? Balloons, balloon pieces and balloon string have been found on rivers and beaches throughout the United Kingdom.



# FACT SHEETS!

**FACT!** Fish are known to have died from swallowing balloon pieces.

Plastic bags are also dangerous to wildlife as they are often mistaken for food and can cause suffocation when swallowed.

Cigarettes butts, if eaten by animals, can be poisonous.

Recently, seals have been spotted below Stranmillis Weir in the Lagan. This area is very popular with fishermen. Seals can get caught up in fishing lines.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR LITTER?

While fishing it is important to collect all litter when you leave for safe disposal at home or in a nearby bin. This includes fishing litter such as hooks, fishing line, bait bags and general litter such as food scraps, food containers, cans, bottles and plastic.