



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Health, the Environment,
Energy and Climate Change

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Gibraltar takes part in regional marine research of invasive algae

The Department of the Environment and Climate Change (DECC) has been working closely with regional marine experts to confirm the presence of an invasive brown algae in Gibraltar originating from central America and the Caribbean. Although initially thought to be a similar species of Forkweed commonly found around Gibraltar's coastline, experts in the field have now concluded that the brown algae washing up on our shores is a tropical variant of Forkweed.

The fact that it is tropical in origin adds credence to the theory that part at least of the reason for its increase in the region recently is rising sea temperatures as result of climate change. "Climate change is one of the possible causes I stated in Parliament in reply to a question", stated Minister for the Environment and Climate Change Dr John Cortes. "Mr Hammond tried to blame local reclamation, and others have mentioned the artificial reef as causes. Clearly the wide nature of the problem, while not something to be pleased about, shows how wrong he was, and demonstrates the limited expertise and knowledge that Mr Hammond has in matters environmental".

Scientists from the DECC have been actively involved in the research carried out in the wider Straits of Gibraltar by collecting samples for genetic identification as well investigating the impacts on the algae on local marine species. To date, the problem has been particularly evident in the northern part of our coasts including Western Beach where both the Government and beach users have been involved in its removal. The same problem has been evident in La Linea and very notably in Ceuta where large quantities of the algae have also invaded their shores. The DECC will continue to monitor the algae in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters in order to better understand its ecology and, more importantly, explore ways of minimising its impacts on our beaches and marine life.