

## Discovery Point

Causeway Coastal Route

# The West Bay

## Surf and Turf

The West Bay creates a perfect amphitheatre for marine sports, with surfers, bathers, rafters and sailors all making the best of the famous West Bay waves, while beneath the sand lies a treasure of natural history.

### Surfing

With some of the best surfing waves in Ireland, the West Bay also boasts the premier reef break of the North Coast. Prevailing north Atlantic swell and sea waves get squeezed by Ramore Head and Carrick Dubh (black rock) before rising and breaking on the gently sloping beach. It has been described as being the best beach for all levels of competency from beginners (at the harbour end) through to the very best who surf the faster left hand tubing waves south of Castle Erin point and close to Dhu Varren, an area known as ‘the Black Rock Run’ (to use skiing parlance).

### Buried peat beds

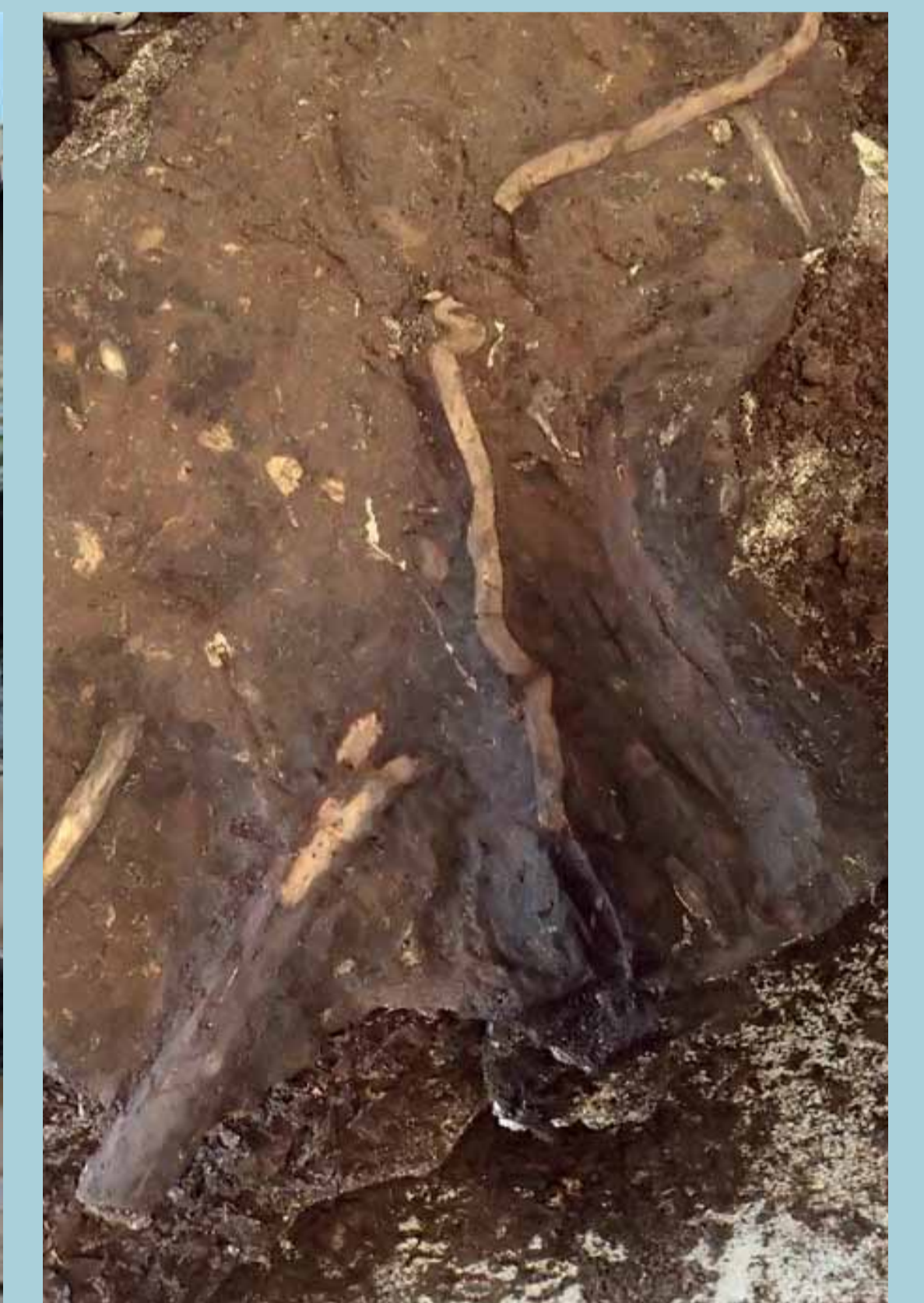
The West Bay is a geological Area of Special Scientific Interest. Beneath the sand are beds of fossilised peat (sometimes referred to as ‘turf’) containing evidence of Ireland’s post glacial history. Often exposed by storms, the peat (up to 5ms deep in places), contains preserved remains of plants (common reed) and trees (alder and birch) that grew in the area over 7,000 years ago when the sea level was lower. A wetter climate created a marsh, fen and later scrubby woodland habitat which eventually waterlogged to form peat.



Surfing in West Bay © Andy Hill Photography



Fossilised peat beds at West Bay, Portrush - Courtesy of DOE (NI) Marine Division



Fossilised wood in ancient peat

## Did you know?

As sea levels rose 5,900 years ago, sand eventually buried the peat. Research shows that even older sand dunes exist beneath the peat layer which extends for a distance out to sea. All proof that our coasts are always changing in response to everything from climate to promenades. **Removal of or damage to the peat is prohibited.**

Funders:



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