

OVERHEARD

Steven
Carroll



Nature offers cause for hope at 'ecological disaster' site

Lady's Island lake has made the headlines for all the wrong reasons lately with media reports highlighting the "ecological disaster" unfolding at the Co Wexford lagoon.

An Environmental Protection Agency study found agricultural run-off from surrounding land had raised the saltwater lake's nutrient levels to multiples of the norm.

This has caused algae to bloom, giving the lake a green hue and blocking light which has led to plants and fish dying at this designated Special Area of Conservation.

With the annual pilgrimage taking place at Our Lady's Island at present, there was a bit of positive news this week for the lake – a Hail Mary, if you will.

Birdwatch Ireland reported a good breeding season for the roseate, sandwich, common and Arctic terns that continue to flock to the lake's islands,

despite the gloom and bloom. However, they were this year joined by little terns, meaning the lake is, according to the conservation group, "the only place in Europe" where the five species are successfully nesting together.

Aptly named

Niall Hatch, Birdwatch Ireland's aptly named head of communications, said this was "certainly something to be celebrated" given the lake's well-publicised issues.

"The reason [the pollution] hasn't impacted the terns is because they are nesting on the islands for security but fishing out at sea for food."

There has been much talk about multi-agency approaches to restoring Lady's Island lake. Nature is trying to do its part, so here's hoping the State can reverse a decline that has been happening in plain view for decades.