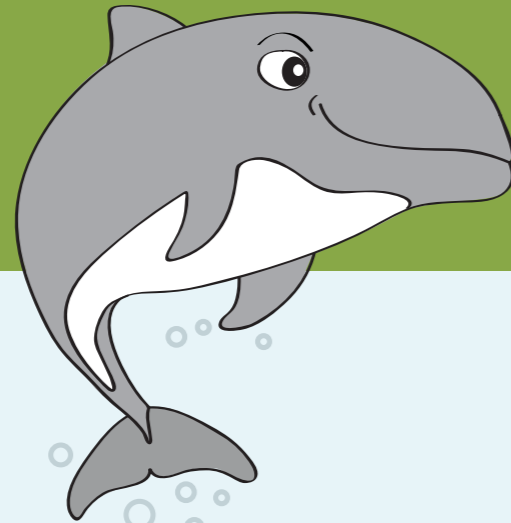


And what can YOU do?

Prevention is the key to reducing the amount of debris in our oceans:



Reduce, reuse and recycle – limit the use of plastics e.g. by using cotton shopping bags, use and dispose of plastic sustainably



Cut the loop – cut open any loops before disposing of rubber bands and six-pack-rings for instance



Tidy up – join clean-up activities in your area, whether at beaches or along rivers



Spread the Word – Inform others about this problem and how they can help

Join the **International Coastal Cleanup**: Each year the third Saturday in September is dedicated to the improvement of beaches, coastal regions and surrounding areas throughout the world. It purports to be the largest volunteer event in the world, and has operated for nearly three decades. More info: <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/>

Why is it a problem?



© Gavin Parsons / Marine Photobank

Effects on Animals

Entanglement

Marine animals can be ensnared by marine debris, either accidentally or while the creature is investigating the item out of curiosity. The animals most frequently affected by entanglement are seals and whales, as well as birds and turtles. When entangled, they often cannot swim and feed themselves properly anymore, or they suffocate. If the items cut into their skin and flesh, they can also get serious infections.



© Nina Sauer



© Bob Talbot / Marine Photobank

Ingestion

Ingestion occurs when animals swallow parts of or whole litter items. This can happen accidentally; however, most of the items are swallowed because they are mistaken for food. To a hungry turtle, a plastic bag and a jellyfish look very similar. When swallowed, it can lead to a blockage of the intestinal tract of the animal causing malnutrition and starvation, resulting frequently in long-lasting suffering and death. Some seabirds mistakenly feed their chicks with plastic pieces until they die with a stomach full of litter.

Effects on Humans

With the consumption of seafood, we also can be affected by marine debris indirectly. Many fish species and molluscs are known to ingest pieces of plastic, especially microplastics (items <5mm in size). This is a way for toxins to enter the marine food web, and because we are situated at the top of the food web, we then eat those pollutants, too.

Nobody likes to see a beach full of litter. But besides looking ugly, marine debris can also be harmful to humans and animals by causing direct injuries, damaging boat engines, destroying coral reefs, entangling animals or blocking their digestive systems.



© Renata Ferrari Legoretta / Marine Photobank

Migratory animals regularly cross national boundaries. Their protection can only effectively be achieved by means of international cooperation. As the only global convention specializing in the conservation of species, their habitats and migration routes, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. (www.cms.int)

Concluded under the auspices of CMS, the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) aims to promote close cooperation between countries with a view to achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for small cetaceans throughout the Agreement Area. (www.ascobans.org)

Imprint

© Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
© Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS)
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OCEANS

Full of Plastic

Marine Debris – A Global Problem



What is Marine Debris?



Marine debris is man-made waste that gets in the marine environment intentionally or unintentionally—by disposal or careless handling, as well as due to natural disasters such as heavy storms and tsunamis. Most of the items found at the beach or in the ocean itself are made of plastic or other synthetic materials. Marine debris is a danger to wildlife.



What does it contain?

Items most regularly found are:

1. cigarette butts
2. plastic containers (such as bottles)
3. plastic food bags and wrappers
4. pieces of paper
5. pieces of glass
6. plastic caps and lids



Where does it come from?

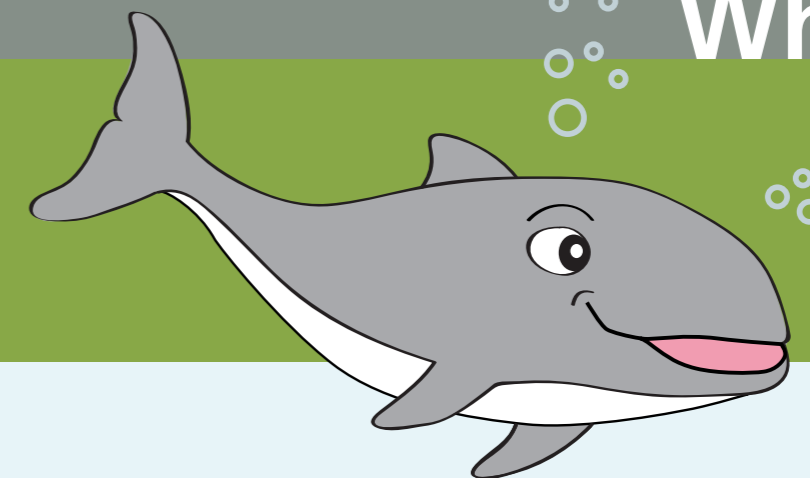
Items can be discarded intentionally or can be blown right into the water body where waves carry them away. Litter items can be carried by creeks, rivers, storm drains, sewers and landfills to ocean areas. Much of the litter is also introduced by people that use the beaches and the adjacent ocean for recreational activities such as sunbathing, swimming, sailing and scuba diving. However, as marine debris can travel long distances, determining its origin is a very difficult task.

How contaminated are our oceans?

Floating debris accumulates in the five large ocean gyres, in the North and South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean as well as in the North and South Pacific. The largest aggregation is the so called Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which contains an estimated three million tons of anthropogenic waste. In total, the world's oceans may carry more than 100 million tons of rubbish.



Whales for kids!



www.kids.ascobans.org

M	I	K	E	Y	X	U	T	S	E	M	J	T	K	N	W	F	A	A	G
E	C	V	Y	A	F	E	E	I	A	J	T	C	Q	V	P	P	M	C	A
G	N	O	T	X	C	A	L	S	X	U	V	M	V	J	G	O	G	E	R
N	U	T	K	S	B	H	N	T	B	G	X	S	X	V	M	G	Y	T	B
I	O	N	A	I	R	A	Y	E	R	A	M	V	T	A	P	E	X	M	A
L	Y	I	R	N	B	O	T	L	E	U	S	J	R	S	I	X	R	P	G
C	G	D	T	O	G	T	P	L	A	S	T	I	C	B	O	T	T	L	E
Y	Q	I	C	S	E	L	K	E	L	A	N	D	F	I	L	L	M	Q	P
C	G	S	U	R	E	R	E	A	J	E	I	M	A	N	U	S	T	H	A
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C	E	O	P	J	T	R	E	W	H	K	T	E	V	Q	B	M	R	G	T
H	R	L	E	O	I	N	V	G	N	I	V	I	D	A	B	U	C	S	B
C	L	P	S	S	S	G	E	K	M	U	I	R	O	C	C	N	S	P	U
A	D	H	A	N	V	C	F	T	Y	V	G	J	W	D	P	D	C	R	D
E	Y	I	E	Z	V	N	X	T	U	W	F	B	N	B	Z	A	F	N	Y
B	F	N	O	U	R	S	D	F	B	T	P	H	S	H	S	Z	X	K	X
H	O	Y	Y	G	R	V	W	A	W	A	G	G	E	F	P	V	D	O	Z
P	E	Q	F	Q	D	V	V	P	B	R	P	L	J	V	J	B	C	V	T

20 Marine Debris-related words are entangled in this box. Can you find them all?

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| ASCOBANS | MARINE DEBRIS |
| BEACH | PLASTIC BOTTLE |
| CIGARETTE BUTT | RECYCLING |
| CMS | ROPE |
| DOLPHIN | SCUBA DIVING |
| ENTANGLEMENT | SEABIRD |
| GARBAGE PATCH | SHARK |
| GYRE | TSUNAMI |
| INGESTION | TURTLE |
| LANDFILL | GHOST NET |

Still missing a word? Find the solution on the www.kids.ascobans.org and learn more about cetaceans through many games and activities!