

Marine Debris



Definition

Marine debris is any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.

Types and Components

Marine debris can come in many forms, from a plastic soda bottle to a derelict vessel. Types and components of marine debris include plastics, glass, metal, Styrofoam, rubber, derelict fishing gear, and derelict vessels.

Sources

Marine debris comes from two main sources, the land and the ocean. Activities in both areas contribute to marine debris.

Movement

Floatable marine debris moves with ocean currents and winds, sometimes being carried far from its origin.

Impacts

The impacts of marine debris are wide ranging. From being an eyesore on a beach to stopping a 400 ton vessel at sea, marine debris is a problem that we cannot ignore.

Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling Helps: Use Less Stuff

Many of our pollution problems are really problems of misplaced resources. For every item we recycle or reuse, that's one less piece of trash that can become a part of the marine debris cycle threatening people and wildlife.

Everything we use in our daily lives is made from natural resources such as trees, petroleum, sand, water, soil, and metals, many of which are non-renewable.

By throwing these materials into our landfills, we drastically reduce the remaining supply of non-renewable natural resources.

How Can I Help?

- Reduce, reuse and recycle at home, work and school.
- Buy products made from recycled materials with little or no packaging.
- Keep storm drains clean - they drain to beaches.
- Keep cigarette butts off streets and beaches.
- Properly dispose of fishing lines, nets and hooks.

Marine debris is everyone's problem. It is a global problem affecting everything from the environment to the economy; from fishing and navigation to human health and safety; from the tiniest coral polyps to giant blue whales. Marine debris also comes in many forms, from a cigarette butt to a 4,000-pound derelict fishing net.

Marine debris is a problem we can solve together. Although marine debris is found worldwide, we can all help with the smallest actions. Reduce, reuse, recycle, and participate in local beach or stream cleanups. If we each do a little, together we can make a big difference.

To learn more about marine debris click here:

<http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>