

NOAA Knows...

# Marine Debris

Every year, unknown numbers of marine animals, including whales, seals, dolphins, turtles, and sea birds, are either injured or die needlessly because they got entangled in or ingested debris and trash that ended up in the oceans.

To help stop this tragedy, coastal communities spend millions of dollars every year trying to prevent and remove debris washing up on their shorelines.

To address this problem, Congress re-established a centralized marine debris program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the NOAA Marine Debris Program.

## NOAA's Marine Debris Program



The NOAA Marine Debris Program, with several NOAA offices, support national and international efforts to identify, reduce, and prevent debris in the marine environment —

working to protect and conserve our nation's natural resources, oceans, and coastal waterways.

The Program supports projects that research the effects of marine debris on the environment, reduce debris, and create educational campaigns.

These campaigns help the public understand the damage marine debris does on a national, regional, and local level.



Example marine debris projects include removing derelict crab pots from the Chesapeake Bay, identifying “ghost nets” or derelict fishing gear in the Pacific Ocean, studying the effects of derelict fishing gear on marine mammals in the Northeast, and educational marine debris outreach in Guam.

## Program Benefits

The NOAA Marine Debris Program will create a cleaner environment; ensure safer waters for people, animals, and navigation; and improve the health of coastal and marine environments by:

- ▶ Identifying and evaluating the adverse effects of marine debris upon the marine environment and living marine resources.
- ▶ Educating the public, inspiring them to change their behavior for a healthier ocean.
- ▶ Minimizing and preventing the amounts of marine debris entering the oceans.
- ▶ Designing and implementing materials and programs to inform industry and the public of the problem caused by persistent marine debris and of the range of available solutions.

*(continued on back)*





## Our Partners

NOAA partners with other federal agencies, academia, industries, and non-governmental organizations, among others, to reduce marine debris and its effects.

NOAA is Chair of the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee, formally re-established by the Marine Debris Research, Prevention and Reduction Act. This committee is responsible for developing comprehensive plans to reduce marine debris and its effects on our marine environment, natural resources, public safety, and economy.



The IMDCC coordinates federal agency marine debris activities, both nationally and internationally, and recommends research priorities, monitoring techniques, educational programs, and regulatory action.

## Mandates

NOAA is working hard to reduce the risks of marine debris to humans, the environment, as well as the economy — creating and maintaining healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems that benefit everyone.



Mandates supporting NOAA's efforts are:

- ▶ Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1951 et seq.
- ▶ Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1901 et seq.
- ▶ Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, (Title II) 33 U.S.C. §§ 1401 et seq.
- ▶ Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 et seq.
- ▶ U.S. Ocean Action Plan.

For more information about marine debris and what you can do, visit the NOAA Marine Debris Program Web site at <http://www.marinedebris.noaa.gov>.

To learn more about NOAA, visit <http://www.noaa.gov>. 