

We All Can Help



Take Action:

When consuming

- Refuse disposables, reduce, reuse, recycle
- Buy reusable, recycled products with little or no packaging.
- Avoid products containing microbeads.
- Choose natural over synthetic fibers for things that will be washed frequently.

When outdoors

- Keep storm drains clean
- Don't leave anything behind
- Put cigarette butts in trash—don't drop.

When boating, fishing

- Properly dispose of fishing lines, nets and hooks.
- Recycle your monofilament fishing line.

Get Involved

- Learn about proposed and potential government action
- Volunteer for beach or stream cleanups.



Marine Debris

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Marine Debris

A Growing Problem



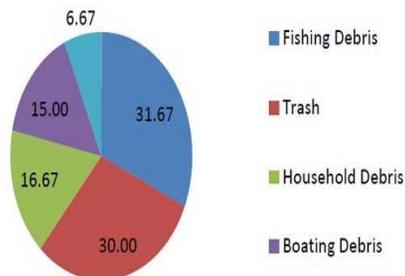
On Florida's First Coast

We're In This Together

In the United States, the average person throws away 5 lbs. of garbage each day, about 1/4 of which is non-biodegradable—it will last for a very long time. Over the last ten years, we have produced more plastic than during the whole of the last century, and the majority of this plastic is disposable, meaning it gets thrown out shortly after use. It is estimated that around 8.8 million tons of plastic end up in the world's oceans every single year. All of us are responsible—even if we don't live at the beach or near the ocean. Almost 1/3 of marine debris comes from our homes or trash.



User Group Contribution to Marine Debris (Percent)



Common Marine Debris Items and How Long They Last

Glass Beverage Bottles	Undetermined
Monofilament Line	600 years
Plastic Bottles	450 years
Plastic 6-Pack Rings	400 years
Aluminum Cans	80-200 years
Foam Plastic Buoys	80 years
Styrofoam Cups	50 years
Tin Cans	50 years
Plastic Grocery Bags	10-20 years
Cigarette Butts	1-10 years
Cotton Rope	1-5 years



Why Marine Debris Is A Problem

Wildlife Impacts

- Ropes, nets and fishing line can entangle many types of coastal and aquatic creatures.
- Cans and bottles trap small creatures which get into them looking for food, but then cannot get out.
- Cigarette butts and shiny objects can be brought to nests where sharp objects and harmful chemicals can injure seabirds.



- Plastic bags and balloons are often mistaken for jellyfish by animals and eaten.
- Plastic eventually breaks down into small fragments. Seabirds may swallow them along with food.

Physical Impacts

- Debris can degrade or destroy habitat
- It can reduce the amount of light, disrupting photosynthesis and the entire food web.
- Debris can impact dissolved oxygen available to aquatic creatures.

Chemical Impacts

- Plastics contain, attract and concentrate many harmful chemicals