



SECURING OUR SEAS

ADDRESSING MARINE DEBRIS: PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOLUTIONS

Plastic waste in the oceans is a growing environmental and health concern for the ocean ecosystem including whales, fish, reefs and humans. Marine pollution originates from vastly different sources and falls under no one jurisdiction, making it a particularly difficult problem to address. Until the pollution is stopped at its source, research and animal rescue efforts are essential to mitigating the impacts of marine debris on marine life and ecosystems. Important partnerships are being made throughout the ocean community to learn more about the sources of marine debris and find solutions to limit the damage these pollutants can do to our oceans.

The Problem

- o *Up to 80 percent of marine debris originates on land.*
- o *Other debris is generated at sea from lost fishing equipment and vessels, cargo containers swept overboard and illegal dumping. Large storms and tsunamis can also deposit enormous amounts of debris into coastal areas and deeper waters.*
- o *An estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic waste flows into the ocean yearly from the land.*
- o *Plastics in the ocean are primarily the result of limited and ineffective waste management infrastructure (including insufficient financing) in those countries where plastics consumption is outpacing the ability of local communities to handle the waste.*
- o *Derelict fishing gear, plastic bags, disposable cutlery and balloons are thought to pose the greatest risk to seabirds, sea turtles and marine mammals.*

Addressing the Problem

- o *Public and private partnerships are essential to addressing the problem of marine debris.*
- o *More resources toward research to better understand the sources, distribution, fates and impacts of marine debris.*
- o *Education and outreach for public and consumer education.*
- o *Better business: Drive innovation, better utilize resources and create efficiency without compromising the quality of the product.*

- o *The U.S. can be a leader in finding solutions through policies and actions to influence industrial practices, consumer habits, and disposal patterns.*



SEAWORLD PARKS
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LONELY WHALE
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Marine Mammal Commission
An Independent Agency of the U.S. Government