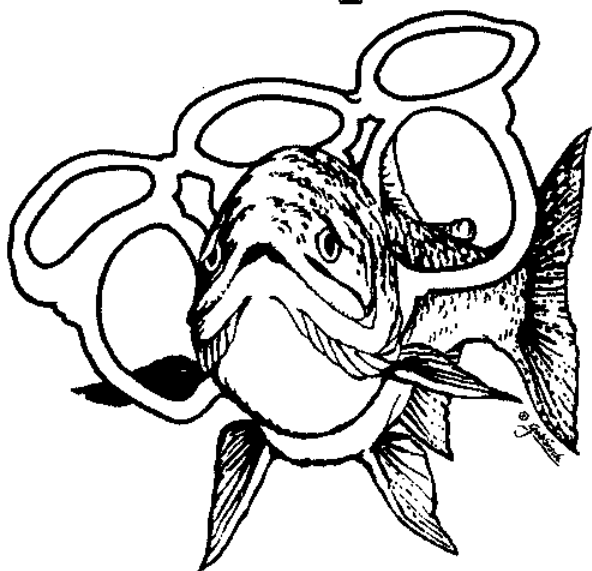


ONLY

**Don't Splash**

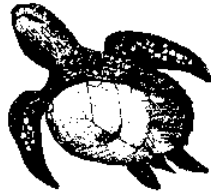


**Your Trash**

**...Get a  
grip on it!**

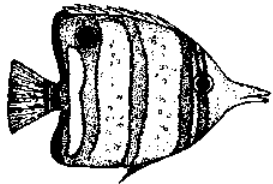
# Let's Talk Trash

Have you ever noticed garbage floating in a lake, canal or river? Maybe you've seen it cluttering the beach, or swimming in the ocean. Marine debris includes all materials found in the marine



environment that do not naturally occur there. The most common types

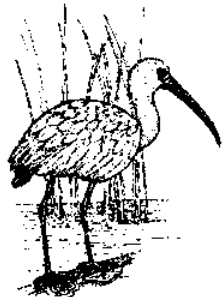
of marine debris are plastic, glass, rubber, metal, paper, wood, and cloth. The most common source of marine



debris is land-based, from

domestic trash, stormwater runoff, and sewer overflows. Industries and individuals contribute to the problem by practicing poor waste disposal actions. Marine debris has impacts on both humans and wildlife. For humans, marine debris is not only unsightly, but it also poses health and safety hazards. For wildlife, problems occur when animals get entangled in, or swallow debris.

This often leads to suffocation, which can lead to a slow, painful death for the animal.



## Trashy Facts

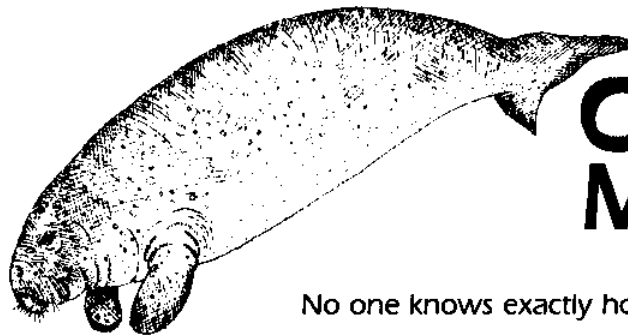


Every year, Americans throw away:

- 40 million tons of paper,
- 28 billion bottles,
- 60 billion cans, and
- 4 million tons of plastic.

The average American generates at least 6 pounds of trash every day.

Plastic bags and other plastic garbage that are thrown into the ocean kill nearly 1 million sea creatures every year.



## Composition of Marine Debris

No one knows exactly how much debris is present in our oceans, but each year we gain some perspective on the amounts and types of materials littering our oceans from the data collected during the yearly international Coastal Cleanups sponsored by the Center for Marine Conservation (CMC).

In the 1999 Florida Cleanup, approximately 70% of the total debris was plastic. It's the number one type of material found, despite the strict international regulations in MARPOL Annex V prohibiting the dumping of plastics into U.S. waters. Metal (10.2%), glass (7.9%) and paper (7.1%) followed in rank. All locations harbored debris that was potentially harmful to both wildlife and humans.

On a more local level, within the tri-county area (Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach), plastic was the most abundant form of debris collected. Most of the plastics found were packaging materials (bags, wrappers, caps and lids) or miscellaneous debris (fragments and pellets). Metal appeared in the form of bottle caps and beverage cans.

Interestingly enough, land sources of marine debris contribute 70% of all trash found in the ocean. Most of this is washed off of our streets into the stormwater drains that flow into waterways. What we do on land influences our waterways, so REMEMBER... "Don't Splash Your Trash!"

# How You Can Help

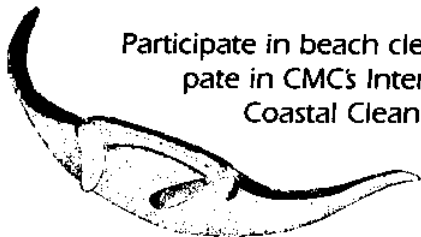
Try to buy recyclable products. Recycle, reduce, and reuse materials whenever possible.

When boating, bring your garbage back to shore for disposal. Keep a garbage pail or bag onboard, for easy waste disposal access on the water. Also, retrieve trash that you encounter on the water.



Don't dispose of fishing lines, nets or plastic items in or near the water. Animals (and even small children too!), can become entangled, or may ingest these items, leading to suffocation.

Adopt a beach! Have a favorite beach? Well do YOUR part by making sure to clean it every time you visit. Encourage other beachgoers to do the same.



Participate in beach cleanups! Participate in CMC's International Coastal Cleanup held each third Saturday in September.

Care! Pass on your knowledge by getting involved in your community and educating others and yourself about debris in our waterways. Let's work together in reducing the debris that ends up in our oceans.

This information was written by Sacheen Tavares and Marella Crane, the Broward County and Miami-Dade County Marine Extension Agents for Florida Sea Grant. It is provided as a cooperative effort on behalf of the following organizations.



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