

# Stewardship of the Oceans

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# Scope of Plastics Problem

- Relatively recent, yet massive (1950s on), pervasive and persistent
- Worldwide, single-use packaging largest source of trash
  - 90.5 % - Royal Statistical Society, England 2018 statistic of the year
    - Proportion of plastic waste never recycled
  - Collins Dictionary named “single-use” 2018 word of the year

# Teenage Diver Finds Tons Of Golf Balls Rotting Off California

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Christopher Joyce / NPR



PHOTO BY COURTESY OF ALEX WEBER

# Marine Debris

## TRACKER

[Home](#) [View and Get Data](#) [Top Trackers](#) [How do I Start Tracking?](#) [Tracker Photos](#) [About](#) [Connections](#)

Thousands of people have logged and removed over 1 MILLION pieces of litter and debris all over the world!

### Recent Debris Activity

With Marine Debris Tracker, it just takes a few seconds to easily report where you find marine debris or litter anywhere in the world... and then prevent it from impacting our oceans.

GSTC Citizen Science in St. Simons, Georgia, United States found 5 items of 4 types at 5 locations @ 7:38pm on 01/20



anonymous in Avon, Ohio, United States found 62 items of 11 types at 20 locations @ 3:27pm on 01/20



Yinyang in Manatee County, Florida, United States found 5 items of 1 types at 5 locations @ 3:58pm on 01/20



Leave only waves and footprints behind...



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Tweets by @DebrisTracker



**MarineDebrisTracker**  
@DebrisTracker



4.77 tons of debris, including a toilet, 6 beach chairs, 8 coolers, an inflatable dinghy and an entire refrigerator filled with unopened beverages. It's a weird world of #MarineDebris out there. What's the strangest thing you've found on a #LitterCleanUp?  
[thecoastlandtimes.com/2019/01/16/vol...](http://thecoastlandtimes.com/2019/01/16/vol...)

# New Tools, Practices, Partnerships

- *National Geographic* tracks new developments
  - E.g. no plastic straws in Washington, D.C.
- Alliance to End Plastic Waste
  - ~30 companies committed \$1.0 billion/5 years recycling/clean up
  - (but also investing in new plastic production)
- New Plastics Economy Global Commitment (circular economy)
  - Ellen MacArthur Foundation and UN
  - ~290 organizations that produce 20% of global plastic packaging

# The Power of International Instruments

- Address transboundary environmental issues
- Global models for regional texts
- Build community, foster trust
- Show leadership, influence social norms
- Increase accountability
- Harmonize standards and practices
- Help develop and share new science
  - ICES and PICES

# A Sea of International Marine Instruments...

- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 82)
- London Dumping Convention 72 (direct disposal)
- MARPOL 73/78 (ship-borne)
- Basel Convention on Hazardous Waste 89
- Washington Declaration on Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities 95
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 01
- And many more...

But none dedicated to solve problem of marine plastic pollution

# How to Protect the Global Ocean Common?

1. Amend existing instrument (global or regional)
2. Negotiate a new legally binding instrument to regulate at global level (within Law of the Sea)
3. Negotiate new “stand-alone” agreement independent of Law of the Sea



# New EU-wide Directive

- Rules target 10 most common single-use plastic
  - 70% of all marine litter
  - New rules “proportionate and tailored”
    - Bans where alternatives available and affordable (straws, swabs, plates)
    - Limit use when no clear alternatives
      - design and labelling, waste management/clean-up obligations
- But issue of equity

# Towards Better Stewardship

- Systems thinking is essential to address complexity
- True stewardship requires national and regional authorities, cities, the entire plastics value chain, and all stakeholders to act
- International agreements can provide critical frameworks for conceptual and practical guidance

