



Marine Debris

Introduction

Let's learn about one of the biggest threats to our ocean and the plants and animals that call it home: marine debris. Start by watching the [NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' 1-minute video on marine debris](#). Next, watch a [2-minute introductory video on marine debris](#). While you watch, try to answer the guiding questions below:

1. What is marine debris?
2. What can you do to help reduce plastic pollution in your ocean?

Watch an [Earth is Blue 1-minute video on marine debris](#) in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Fill in the correct numbers from the video to complete these sentences:

- NOAA has removed ___ tons of marine debris from Papahānaumokuākea since 1994.
- ___ tons of marine debris wash up in the monument each year.

Download these fact sheets to learn more about different types of marine debris. Once you've read them, don't forget to share what you learn with friends, family, and classmates!

- [Marine debris fact sheet](#)
- [Plastic marine debris fact sheet](#)
- [Microplastic marine debris fact sheet](#)
- [Garbage patches fact sheet](#)

Once marine debris enters the ocean, how long does it stay there? Read [this short article to learn why scientists still don't fully know how long it takes marine debris to completely degrade](#). Now that you have a better understanding of marine debris and its connection to your national marine sanctuaries, you're ready to dive into the activities below to learn more about what you can do to help!

Hands-On Learning

Discover how marine debris makes its way into the diet of seabirds, while also practicing a technique commonly used by scientists in [the Winged Ambassadors bolus contents identification activity](#)!

Explore how the presence of marine debris in food supplies can increase over time through a probability experiment: [Marine Debris: The Probability of Human Impact](#).



Photo: David Slater/NOAA

Take Action

Following [the campus debris survey lesson plan](#), get outdoors to your school's campus, a nearby beach or park, or any outdoor location, and complete a debris survey and cleanup.

For teachers: download [the Marine Debris Monitoring Toolkit for Educators](#) produced by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. In it you'll find lessons, videos, and instructions on how to conduct a marine debris survey with your students.

Keep track of your family's (or classroom's) plastic bag usage with [the plastic, plastic everywhere activity](#), and ultimately try to make the switch to reusable bags. For families at home, try Activity 1 (found on page 3). Be sure to track your plastic bag usage on the data sheet found on the last page!

[In this craft activity, create magnets spreading the word about marine debris](#) and what we can do to limit pollution in our ocean. Don't forget to share them with friends, family, and classmates!

Explore [the NOAA Marine Debris Program website](#) to discover more ways you can take action in your community.

Independent Activities

Hey K-3rd graders! Want to learn how to become an ocean guardian? Check out [the Protect our Ocean activity book](#).

To continue learning about marine debris in a fun way, try [the Understanding Marine Debris activity book](#).

[Download the ParkPassport App](#) to learn more about national marine sanctuaries. Take virtual tours, view live webcams, earn digital badges, and more.

All information in this document was adapted from the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' resources. This collection was developed in partnership with the National Park Trust in support of the 50th anniversary of the National Marine Sanctuary System. *The inclusion of links in this guide does not imply endorsement or support of any of the linked information, services, products, or providers.*



Photo: Ryan Tabata

