



Yorkshire
Wildlife Trust

Marine plastic & pollution transcript

Today we will understand the term marine litter, understand the impacts of marine litter, be able to sort marine litter in to different groups based on material and source and understand what you can do yourself to help reduce plastic pollution.

So what is marine litter? It is litter that is found on our beaches and in the sea.

How do you think that litter gets to the beach and in our seas?

It can be dropped by people visiting beaches, it can be left by people who fish as a hobby. Litter can be left by fishermen who are working out at sea. Sometimes people deliberately dump their rubbish which is known as fly tipping. Litter can get to our beaches and sea through sewage. And sometime we just don't know!

Where does litter come from? On our beach cleans along the Yorkshire coast, we have found litter from all around Europe so it can travel large distances in the sea. A plastic bottle can take up to 500 years to break down.

What type of litter might we find? We find all sorts whilst picking up litter on the beach like this Heinz ketchup packet from a food outlet or this broken-down balloon. Only 15% of litter that is in the ocean washes up on our beaches so we only see a very small amount, compared to the litter that is still in the sea.

You never know what you might find like this knitted Santa.

We also find a lot of fishing litter like these ropes and nets which are made up of a variety of different materials.

So what is litter made of? It can be plastic, polystyrene, cloth, wood, metal, rubber, paper or glass!

How do you think litter might affect the animals that live in the sea?

It can often entangle animals like this bird which would have struggled to feed and survive. It can cut animals if it is sharp like this discarded fishing hook which got caught in this gannet's mouth. Discarded nets and rope can often entangle animals like seals that spend most of their time in the water. If fishing nets are lost or left in the water, they will keep on catching animals which will then, attract more animals, creating a continuous loop. As litter like plastics take such a long time to break down, they will just keep breaking into smaller and smaller pieces which means animals are more likely to mistake this for food and eat it. A

study was done along the North Sea coast using a type of seabird called a fulmar. Scientists looked at how many birds had large amounts of plastic in their stomach when they died and unfortunately 98% of fulmars did. This is a huge issue that is impacting the whole marine environment.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust started a project called 'Fishing For Litter' which works with Yorkshire fishermen, making it as easy as possible for them to pick up litter whilst they are out at work and to dispose of it correctly.

So what can you do to help reduce plastic pollution in our seas?

Sometimes it might feel like such a big issue, that our individual actions won't make an impact but if we all do our bit, it will!

Come with your family and join us on a beach clean, cut down on the amount of plastic in your lunchbox, talk to your family about what you can all do to reduce the amount of litter you create, and finally, tell your friends and family! We need to spread the word!