



What Is Marine Debris?

Marine debris is any rubbish that is washed, blown or disposed of into the marine and coastal environment. Plastics are the most common type of marine debris, with most being related to what we consume – food and beverage products, tobacco and other consumer goods. Other major sources of marine debris are shipping, boating and fishing.

The types of marine debris vary, but it all has one thing in common – at a critical point, someone made a poor decision and rubbish either accidentally or deliberately ended up in the marine environment



Should We Be Concerned About Marine Debris?

Dumping waste products in the ocean has been in practice for centuries. Our habits have not changed, but marine debris is now dramatically different. Over the past 40 years organic materials have been replaced by synthetics like plastic that are durable and slow to degrade.

The very properties that make these materials so useful make them a serious problem for our marine environment as the slow rate of decomposition leads to a gradual, but significant, accumulation in the coastal and marine environment.

Once in the ocean, marine debris can be transported over long distances by current and wind. Marine debris is therefore an important global issue requiring urgent attention

Marine debris is a concern because it causes serious problems for humans, wildlife, sensitive aquatic habitats and the economic sustainability of coastal communities.



Is Marine Debris An Issue In The Whitsundays?

The Whitsunday region is facing an extremely high risk from the consequences of marine debris as the islands protrude from the Queensland coast and have many bays and beaches that are open to the south-east trade winds. The islands therefore act as a natural collection point for any marine debris that being transported by wind and current along the Queensland coastline.

In addition, the high occurrence of marine-based activities in the area, careless throw-away behaviours and lack of adequate waste control measures within urban infrastructure all contribute to marine debris in the Whitsundays.



How Can We Prevent Marine Debris?

The most effective way to reduce the impacts of marine debris is to prevent it ever entering the marine environment

With it estimated that 60 – 80% of marine debris originates from land-based sources, we can all play a part in minimising this debris. Making sure that your rubbish is always disposed of into a bin will prevent land-based litter from washing or blowing into the marine environment.

We can also help by remembering the following:
REDUCE – try to reduce the amount of trash you produce by making an effort to purchase items with minimal packaging.
REUSE – try to focus on using items that are reusable rather than disposable.
RECYCLE - if you do use disposable items it is important to recycle as this reduces the amount of new items that need to be created.

We produce about 1 million tonnes of plastic litter every year in Australia

You can also help prevent marine debris while boating and fishing by bringing ALL of your rubbish back to shore; securing everything on your vessel; using environmentally friendly fishing tackle where possible; remembering to go back for your crab pots; and removing any rubbish you see in or near the water and disposing of it properly.



What Is Being Done About Marine Debris Locally?

Eco Barge Clean Seas Inc. is a not-for-profit environmental organisation that was established in the Whitsunday region to protect our precious marine life and aquatic environment by removing existing marine debris and reducing the amount of rubbish that enters our waterways.

We achieve this through the **Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program** by providing the opportunity for the community to become proactive in collecting marine debris from our beaches and coastline, while undertaking education and awareness concerning the issue of marine debris and promoting the importance of thoughtful waste disposal.

The Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program aims to be constant and on-going, with the regular removal of marine debris providing long-term protection for the iconic Whitsunday region.

Marine litter is one of the most threatening, but also the most solvable, pollution issue currently impacting the world's oceans



Want To Be Involved?

We are always in need of volunteers and sponsors for the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program. If you are interested you can get more information or register on our website.

www.ecobargecleanseas.org.au



Eco Barge Clean Seas Inc.
Keeping our seas clean!

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Made possible by funding from the
Australian Government's Caring for our
Country Program