

REEL ANGLERS PREVENT MARINE DEBRIS

*Marine Debris Best Practices for
Recreational Anglers and Fishing Guides*



Sea Grant
Texas

AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



MARINE DEBRIS IS A CRITICAL ISSUE FACING MANY COASTAL AREAS. Texas has regularly been among the top states with the greatest volume of marine debris on its shorelines and has been shown to accumulate 5-10 times more debris than areas in the eastern Gulf of Mexico and other U.S. states.^{1,4} This has negative impacts on natural resources and humans alike. Marine life, including fish, sea turtles, marine mammals, and seabirds, can swallow pieces of trash and experience entanglements. Additionally, trash in our coastal environments is unsanitary and impacts the natural beauty of Texas beaches and waterways, which should remain safe, navigable, and clean for all to enjoy.

WHAT IS MARINE DEBRIS?

Single-use plastics and other disposable products are the most common items identified as marine debris in Texas.² This includes plastic fragments, plastic beverage bottles and their caps, plastic containers/jugs, food wrappers, cups, straws, utensils, and cigarette butts. Derelict fishing gear, such as traps, rope, nets, and fishing line, can also contribute to the problem.³



Marine debris on the beach. Photo by Andriy Nekrasov.



Monofilament fishing line. Photo by Texas Sea Grant.

PREVENTING MARINE DEBRIS

Texans can help keep our waters and shorelines clean by following some simple best practices. It is easier and less costly to prevent marine debris than to remove it from the environment. We should all do our part to reduce our use of single-use plastics by choosing reusable items for our fishing activities and in our daily lives whenever possible.

Anglers and fishing guides can follow these tips to help conserve their coastal environment and reduce the amount of marine debris originating from Texas fisheries.

We hope these tips inspire you to interact with Texas' natural resources in a more sustainable and responsible manner. See tx.ag/marinedebris for more information about how you can prevent marine debris as a recreational angler or fishing guide.

TIPS FOR RECREATIONAL ANGLERS

- Have a system for containing garbage onboard your vessel so that it doesn't get blown overboard.
- Never throw trash or fishing line in the water.
- Retrieve and dispose of any floating trash you see, if safe to do so.
- In cases where plastic packaging is unavoidable, such as when purchasing new fishing equipment, remove the packaging and dispose of it on land before getting on your vessel to reduce the chances of the plastic becoming marine debris.
- Always dispose of used monofilament fishing line in a monofilament recycling bin located at boat ramps, piers, and tackle shops throughout coastal Texas. See the Texas Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program (tx.ag/mrrp) for more information.
- Secure all belongings on your vessel so they don't blow overboard while the vessel is in motion.
- Carry water or coffee in a reusable bottle or cup so you don't have to buy drinks in disposable containers at work, school, or when travelling.
- Consider using reusable items such as tote bags, silicone food storage bags, and metal or silicone straws. There are sustainable alternatives to many commonly used household products.



REPORT ENTANGLED ANIMALS TO THE APPROPRIATE AGENCY



MARINE MAMMALS
Texas Marine Mammal
Stranding Network
1-800-9-MAMMAL
(1-800-962-6625)



SEA TURTLES
1-866-TURTLE-5
See tx.ag/turtles
to locate the
response agency
closest to you



**SEABIRDS AND
OTHER SMALL
WILDLIFE**
Rehabilitation
contacts by Texas
county: tx.ag/rehab

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR FISHING GUIDES

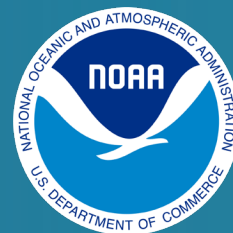
- Brief customers and guests on environmental principles, such as the species and habitats you are likely to encounter on your fishing trip.
- If providing water to charter clients, consider using a large refillable dispenser and encouraging guests to bring their own reusable bottles to reduce the number of plastic bottles being brought to the marine environment, where they have the potential to become marine debris.
- Explain why you are using any reusable products on your boat to engage with your clients and build your business' reputation of being a sustainable one.
- Share your knowledge by teaching newer anglers and younger generations about marine debris and environmental stewardship practices.

REFERENCES

- 1 Hardesty, B. D., Wilcox, C., Schuyler, Q., Lawson, T.J., & Opie, K. (2017) Developing a Baseline Estimate of Amounts, Types, Sources and Distribution of Coastal Litter – An Analysis of US Marine Debris Data. Version 1.2. A Final Report for Ocean Conservancy and NOAA. CSIRO: EP167399.
- 2 NOAA Marine Debris Monitoring and Assessment Project Data. 2023, updated continuously. Texas dataset. Nov 2015 - April 2023. Marine Debris Program, Office of Response and Restoration, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Data accessed 04-18-2023 at <https://mdmap.orr.noaa.gov/>.
- 3 Ocean Conservancy (2021). International Coastal Cleanup 2020 Report. 32 pp. https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2020-ICC-Report_Web_FINAL-0909.pdf.
- 4 Wessel C., Swanson K., Weatherall T., & Cebrian J. (2019). Accumulation and distribution of marine debris on barrier islands across the northern Gulf of Mexico. Marine Pollution Bulletin, 139, 14-22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2018.12.023>.



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