BOATING AND MARINE DEBRIS

What Is Marine Debris?

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration defines marine debris as any man-made object discarded, disposed of or abandoned that enters the coastal or marine environment. It includes, but is not limited to, cigarette filters, food wrappers, beverage bottles and cans, grocery and trash bags and fishing line, nets and gear.

ROBSON G. SANTOS

Where Does It Come From?

Marine debris shares a common origin – people. The mishandling of waste materials and other items makes up the bulk of the marine debris problem.

What are the Impacts?

Grocery and trash bags, fishing line, nets and rope pose threats to boaters and the oceans and waterways that they enjoy. It wraps around boat propellers and clogs seawater intakes, causing costly damage and safety hazards.

Discarded fishing line, nets, rope and other debris can entangle, maim and cause many wildlife species to drown.

Some debris looks like food and is ingested by many animals. These materials can cause starvation and/or choking.

What You Can Do to Prevent Marine Debris

Boaters

- Bring ALL of your trash back to shore as well as any debris that you find and dispose of it properly.
- Properly secure trash on your boat so that it won't blow overboard and strongly urge that guests not throw trash from your boat.
- Report illegal dumping to your local U.S. Coast Guard Sector Office. Call (800) 424-8802 to locate the Sector Office near you.
- Encourage your marina to provide adequate trash cans and recycling bins.

Marinas

- Set up easily accessible trash cans, dumpsters and recycling bins for staff and customers. Make sure to empty them regularly and secure them so that they can't be opened by strong winds or animals.
- Encourage boaters to set up an on board system to segregate trash for easy disposal and recycling on shore.

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

www.marinedebris.noaa.gov