



# Trash Kills!

Our trash kills. When odds and ends of life on land end up in the sea, they can harm marine life. **Animals drown or strangle** from getting tangled in discarded or lost fishing gear, or suffer and even die from eating plastics and other garbage.

**About four-fifths of marine trash comes from land**, swept by wind or washed by rain off highways and city streets, down streams and rivers, and out to sea.

The rest comes from ships - synthetic floats and other gear **dumped illegally** to avoid the cost of proper disposal in port. Also, thousands of cargo containers fall overboard in stormy seas each year, spilling their contents.

**Almost 90 percent of floating marine debris is plastic.** Its durability, buoyancy, and ability to absorb and concentrate toxins present in the ocean, makes plastic especially harmful to marine life

Common items like fishing line, strapping bands and six-pack rings can entangle marine animals. Once caught, animals have trouble eating, breathing or swimming, all of which can have fatal results. **Plastics take hundreds of years** to break down and may continue to trap and kill animals year after year.

**Birds, fish and mammals often mistake plastic for food.** Some birds even feed it to their young. With plastic filling their stomachs, animals have a false feeling of being full, and may die of starvation. Sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, one of their favorite foods. Even gray whales have been found dead with plastic bags and sheeting in their stomachs.

An estimated **One million seabirds** choke or get tangled in plastic nets or other debris every year. About 100,000 seals, sea lions, whales, dolphins, other marine mammals and sea turtles suffer the same fate. On Midway Atoll, 40 percent of albatross chicks die, their bellies full of trash.



# How Can I Help?



- \* **Reduce, reuse** and **recycle** at home, work and school.
- \* Buy products made from recycled materials with **little** or **no packaging**.
- \* Keep **storm drains** clean, they drain to beaches.
- \* Keep **cigarette butts** off streets and beaches.
- \* Properly dispose of **fishing lines, nets** and **hooks**.

