

Marine Plastics

Plastic is turning up in every corner of our planet – from Cornish beaches, to uninhabited Pacific islands, nowhere has escaped plastic contamination.

We produce nearly 300 million tons of plastic every year, half of which is for single use only. More than 8 million tons of plastic is dumped into the sea annually, with an average plastic bag having a working life of only 15 minutes but lasting over 100 years.

Plastic is a valuable resource, but plastic pollution is an unnecessary and unsustainable waste. In certain parts of the world, plastic pellets, micro plastics, microbeads, and other forms of plastic now outnumber fish.

300

million tons of plastic
produced every year



Protecting our marine environment

The barrage of plastic released into the world's oceans poses a serious danger to marine life. It's well documented that marine creatures can get tangled up in this as well as ingest it, whether by mistaking it for prey or because the plastic has been broken down into tiny particles by seawater.

It's important to remember that around 80 per cent of marine litter actually originates on land, either swept in from the coastline or carried to rivers from the streets during heavy rain via storm drains and sewer overflows. However, this means that the source of the problem can be cut off by our actions.

Reports suggest that plastic in the seas will rise tenfold by 2025 if nothing is done to dramatically reduce waste generation or manage it more effectively. At Mott MacDonald we're working with clients, stakeholders and other parties to address this marine plastic pollution issue. We are focusing on solutions using our cross disciplinary expertise to manage marine plastic pollution, while supporting public awareness and our changing clients' needs in managing their own plastic footprint.

43%

increase in the number of plastic bottles washed up on UK beaches in 2015

80%

of marine litter originating on land



What steps can we take to reduce the amount of plastics entering our oceans?

- Wean yourself off disposable plastics. Take note of how often you rely on these products and replace them with reusable versions.
- Stop buying water, especially disposable individual plastic bottles.
- Use fewer microbeads. Opt for products with natural exfoliants like oatmeal or salt instead.
- Cook more. For those times when you do order a takeaway, tell the establishment you don't need any plastic cutlery or bring your own food-storage containers to restaurants for leftovers.
- Be sustainable. Purchase second-hand items and look to reuse and recycle.
- Recycle more and more! It seems obvious but the more the better!
- Try to buy in bulk. Consider the product-to-packaging ratio of items you tend to buy often and select the bigger container instead of buying several smaller ones over time.
- Engage manufacturers via social media, requesting they use less plastic in their products and work with them to make them aware of the impacts their packaging and product are having on the environment.