



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

In order to protect and sustain fishing waters for future generations commercial fish harvesters and all other boaters need to properly manage ALL wastes onboard their vessels and at their fishing harbours.

### DO ...

- ~ Contact your local Regional Waste Management Coordinator for your municipality for education and assistance on what waste management options are in place in your municipality.
- ~ Develop suitable waste collection facilities on your vessel, pack up your wastes and bring them back to shore.
- ~ Keep the engine maintained properly to prevent fuel or oil leaks and use bilge socks to remove oil, fuel, solvents and other products before pumping bilge water overboard.
- ~ Where possible, recycle, reuse and compost. Fishing ropes, nets, traps, cardboard boxes, etc. can often be recycled or composted.
- ~ Packaging Awareness! Be aware of packaging on products you purchase; if available choose products with less packaging (i.e. naked block).
- ~ If feasible remove bait from cardboard bait boxes and place in tubs and ice prior to leaving port.
- ~ Support your local harbour management group in developing waste management facilities to properly dispose of waste on land.
- ~ Follow the Environmental Management Plan for your harbour.
- ~ Get your family involved in a beach cleanup with your local community.

### DON'T ...

- ~ Dispose of derelict fishing gear (lines, nets, traps) or any other wastes overboard.
- ~ Dispose of wastes on land improperly.

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
HELP PRESERVE OUR ENVIRONMENT**



For more information:

Beach Sweep information on Marine Debris:  
<http://www.glf.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/os/beach-rivage/debris-e.php>

Canada's National Program of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities:  
<http://www.npa-pan.ca/en/index.cfm>

Marine Pollution Prevention in the Atlantic Region:  
<http://www.marinepollution.gc.ca>

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# MANAGING COMMERCIAL FISHING WASTE AND PROTECTING YOUR FISHING WATERS





## BACKGROUND

The ocean has long been considered a dumping ground where wastes seem to simply disappear. But many wastes do not decompose in the marine environment. For example, plastics and monofilament fishing nets may break down eventually, but will never go away.

It has now become evident the ocean has a limited capacity to absorb wastes. Current disposal practices are taking a heavy toll on coastal ecosystems that are critical to commercial fisheries.

## TYPES OF COMMERCIAL FISHING WASTES

Wastes commonly include fishing nets; traps; ropes; foam and plastic buoys; untreated sewage; contaminated bilge water that can contain combinations of oil, fuel, solvents and other products and garbage (solid waste including frozen bait packaging).

## FROZEN BAIT PACKAGING

Frozen bait is used extensively in the fishing industry worldwide and the majority is packaged with cardboard, plastic liners and plastic straps. An informal survey conducted by DFO - Small Craft Harbours Branch in 2006 indicated a relatively large percentage of bait packaging was being discarded at sea (20% or approximately 600,000 boxes per year were discarded at sea in the Maritime Provinces). Also, a high percentage of the packaging was being disposed of improperly on land.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Bait boxes including plastic bait bags and straps, foam cups, trash bags and other garbage have been found in the most remote parts of Canada's coasts. One study from Environment Canada on Sable Island estimated eight tonnes of debris wash up each year - of this 92% is plastic.

While beach cleanups are important, they have limited impact on the environment, as several studies have indicated approximately **70% of marine litter ends up on the seabed, 15% on beaches and a further 15% remains floating.**

## WHY IS DEBRIS AND PLASTIC HARMFUL TO MARINE LIFE?

Under the waves, plastic debris chokes and strangles fish, turtles, dolphins and whales. The plastic eaten by animals blocks their digestive systems which eventually kills them. Over time plastic breaks down into smaller and smaller particles, which are more likely to be consumed by marine life and enter the food web. Accumulated plastic in a creature's belly can act as a float, making it impossible for the animal to swim, dive or maneuver properly to find food and escape predators. Plastic can also contain some persistent and harmful chemicals, that become concentrated in the food web as small creatures are eaten by larger ones. In these ways, plastic is corrupting the food web, displacing real food and threatening the health of all creatures that depend on the oceans for their nutrition and well-being – including humans.

Other types of marine debris can be toxic, too. Ordinary garbage can release a dangerous class of chemicals known as persistent organic pollutants (POPs). This is especially true when garbage is disposed of by burning, but POPs are extremely toxic even at low concentrations and build up in the fatty tissues of marine animals. POPs disrupt hormones that could result in cancer and birth defects in humans.



"Bilge Water Contamination"