

Marine Debris Monitoring and Assessment Project

Marine debris is a familiar sight on shorelines around the world, and a reminder that there is still work to be done to tackle this global environmental problem. While we know a lot about marine debris, there are questions that can help test and identify the best solutions. How much marine debris is on our shores? What kind of debris is it, and where does it come from? Is marine debris changing over time? You can help find the answers through NOAA's Marine Debris Program Monitoring and Assessment Project (MDMAP).

What is MDMAP?



MDMAP is NOAA's flagship initiative to measure the amount and types of marine debris on shorelines. Using this standardized data collection method, suite of helpful resources, and publicly available data; volunteers, participants, and partners can detect differences in marine debris over time, inspire prevention efforts, and inform education and outreach. MDMAP is also a great opportunity to get outside and get to know your local shorelines.

Who can participate in MDMAP?

You don't have to be a scientist to participate in MDMAP. Anyone with access to a walkable shoreline can collect data and contribute, including individual members of the public, community organization staff and their volunteers, resource management agency staff, teachers, students and school groups, families, and researchers.

How do you collect data?

Collect data by using the resources designed for participants in the [MDMAP Monitoring Toolbox](#). Start by creating or reactivating a site that is 100 meters of walkable shoreline and surveying the site using the MDMAP protocol. Surveys take between 45 minutes - 2 hours, depending on the amount of debris, width of the shoreline, and number of participants. Data should be entered into the [MDMAP database](#), where it is reviewed by NOAA and then becomes publicly available. Monthly surveys are ideal, but the frequency is flexible to your time and goals.



Photo: NOAA

MDMAP By The Numbers:

- Over **600** sites surveyed
- Over **7,000** surveys completed
- Most coastal US states and territories represented
- **12** countries represented
- **1000s** of contributing partners
- MDMAP data used in publications, reports, student theses and capstones



Get started with these steps:

1. Watch our [tutorial series](#).
2. Review the [protocol and field datasheets](#).
3. Choose where to survey. Reactivate a site or start a new one. See a map of sites [here](#).
4. [Request a data entry account](#). Staff will work with you to set up your account and to help you get started.
5. Reach out to md.monitoring@noaa.gov with any questions.
6. Begin surveying!