

## **ACTIVITY:** TOP 15 MARINE DEBRIS ITEMS

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will discover which trash items are the most common marine debris items collected on beaches and waterways, and they will explore the items' composition and potential origin.

### **MATERIALS:**

- Grey Debris Deck
- Top Marine Debris Items List (included at the end of the activity)

*\* This activity can be done without cigarette butts. Follow the same instructions below but exclude the "cigarette butt" card.*

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

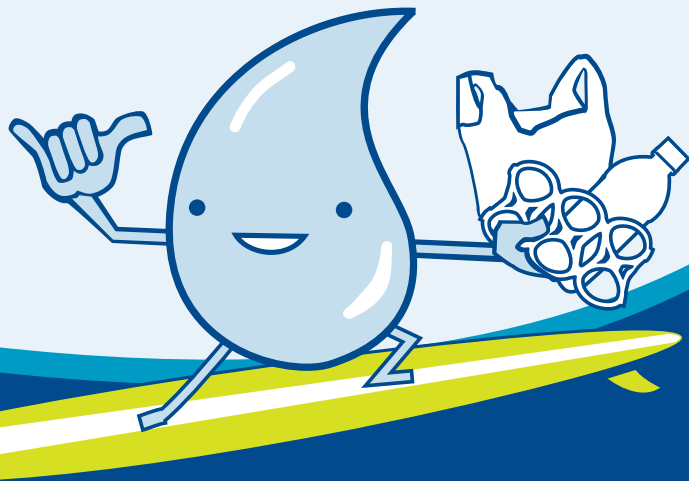
1. **🗨️ SAY:** Now that we understand what marine debris is, let's determine what the most common types of marine debris are.
2. Give one marine debris item card (or the actual item, cleaned) to 15 volunteers if you have a large group or give one to every participant if your group has 23 or less participants.
3. Instruct participants to work together to determine what they think the most common collected marine debris items are. Instruct them to line up in order, from the most common item to the 15th-23rd (depending on number of participants) most common item. Make sure participants are holding their items or cards for the entire group to see.
4. Have each participant in line state his or her item and, if time allows, why he or she is in that spot (i.e., "I have plastic grocery bags and we think this is the number one item because we use them every day and see a lot of them on the street and in parks."). Start at what they believe the most collected item is and proceed down the line.
5. Using the Top Items list, arrange the participants in the actual order of the top marine debris items to see how close their guesses were.

*\* If you excluded cigarettes butts: Reveal to the group that, in fact, cigarette butts/cigarette filters are the number one marine debris item collected. The order of the list is still the same, only cigarettes/cigarette filters are at the top, and this bumps the other items down a spot.*

**DISCUSSION:** Ask participants these questions about the Top 15 list:

- Are you surprised by any of the items on the list?
- Where do you think these items came from?
- What are these items made of?
- How many are plastic?
- Do you use any of these items on a daily basis?

When this activity is over, have the participants hold onto their cards for the next activity.



## TOP 15 MARINE DEBRIS ITEMS

RANK	MARINE DEBRIS ITEM	TOTAL COLLECTED	FUN FACT
1	Cigarette Butts	2,043,470	That's enough cigarettes that when laid end to end, they are the same length as 4,257 school buses. Did you know these butts (the filters) are actually made from type of plastic called cellulose acetate?
2	Food Wrappers	1,685,422	Did you know that most food wrappers, including chip bags and candy wrappers are actually plastic? (See Marine Debris Composition to learn more.)
3	Plastic Beverage Bottles	940,170	That's enough beverage bottles to give every fan attending the Super Bowl 11 sodas.
4	Plastic Bottle Caps	847,972	That is enough bottle caps that when laid end to end, they would cover 3 football fields.
5	Straws/Stirrers	555,007	In the United States alone, 500 million straws are used and thrown away every single day. ( <a href="http://www.ecocycle.org/bestrawfree">www.ecocycle.org/bestrawfree</a> ).
6	Plastic Grocery Bags	441,493	That's enough grocery bags that when combined, they weigh more than a pickup truck.
7	Glass Beverage Bottles	394,796	All glass bottles can be beautiful and are great for reusing as vases or for other craft projects.
8	Other Plastic Bags	389,088	These include garbage bags, sandwich bags, clothing store bags, newspaper bags and more.
9	Paper Bags	368,746	It is estimated Americans consume more than 10 billion paper bags each year ( <a href="http://www.inteplast.us/ibs/InteGreen/facts.html">www.inteplast.us/ibs/InteGreen/facts.html</a> ). That's a lot of bags!
10	Beverage Cans	339,170	Did you know once recycled, an aluminum can becomes a new can in as little as 60 days ( <a href="http://www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=recycling_facts_and_stats">www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=recycling_facts_and_stats</a> )?
11	Plastic Lids	312,996	This category includes lids for to-go drinks such as soda and coffee.
12	Metal Bottle Caps	304,638	Metal bottle caps are great for crafts. Collect metals caps to use as decorations for picture frames or games like checkers.
13	Plastic Cups and Plates	282,743	That is enough cups and plates to host a block party for every single person in Newark, New Jersey.
14	Plastic Takeout Containers	234,692	Next time, think about reusing these to-go food containers for storing things such as baseball cards or craft supplies.
15	Other Plastic/Foam Packaging	233,595	This category includes plastic tarps, crates, fishing bait containers and the foam packaging that surrounds new appliances and electronics. While it may seem crazy, even foam is a type of plastic!

Source: 2013 International Coastal Cleanup.

Please visit [www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/](http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/) for the most up to date Top 10 List or [www.coastalcleanupdata.org](http://www.coastalcleanupdata.org) to find out your local top debris items found.



# HOW TO: PRINT THE DEBRIS DECK

**Overview:** *Talking Trash & Taking Action* is a marine debris education program created through a partnership between Ocean Conservancy and the NOAA Marine Debris Program. It was developed as a means to educate the next generation about ocean trash and, most importantly, how we all can prevent it. The guide includes information about ocean trash and fun activities to go along with each lesson. This file contains the *Debris Deck*, a resource used throughout the program.

**Debris Deck:** This file contains a printable *Debris Deck*, individual cards used in a number of activities of *Talking Trash & Taking Action*. The deck contains 40 cards, each with an ocean trash item and 8 blank cards to create your own. There is also one answer card that lists the most common trash items found based on the 2013 International Coastal Cleanup results. This is a handy card for instructors to refer to for quick answers.

## How to Print the Debris Deck:

The Debris Deck is designed like a deck of cards; one side has the item name and the reverse side has the Talking Trash logo.

- Print this document double-sided so each card will have the item and the logo aligned on the front and back respectively.
- Pages 3-8 contain items that are most commonly found during trash cleanups. Print these first 8 pages on the same color paper.
- Print pages 9-20 on a different color paper. These pages contain items that we call “weird finds” or funny items that were found during cleanups. The different color paper helps distinguish the common items from the weird items once the cards are cut out.
- Once printed, simply cut along the dotted lines to create the individual cards.

**Tip:** If possible, print the cards on thick paper or cardstock. They tend to last longer and are less transparent than normal printer paper.

TALKING TRASH & TAKING ACTION

OCEAN CONSERVANCY | NOAA MARINE DEBRIS



# HOW TO: PRINT THE DEBRIS DECK

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Cigarette Butts

Beverage Cans

Food Wrappers  
(candy, chips, etc.)

Straws, Stirrers

Plastic Bottle  
Caps

Glass Beverage  
Bottles

Plastic Beverage  
Bottles

Metal Bottle  
Caps



Plastic Grocery  
Bags

Foam Cups & Plates

Other Plastic  
Bags

Plastic Cups &  
Plates

Plastic Lids

Plastic Take Out  
Containers

Other Plastic/Foam  
Packaging

Fishing Line





Forks, Knives,  
Spoons

Paper Bags

Foam Take Out  
Containers

Balloons

Rope

Other Plastic  
Bottles  
(milk, bleach, etc.)

Paper Cups &  
Plates

Top Items Collected (2013)	
1	Cigarette Butts 2,043,470
2	Food Wrappers (candy, chips, etc.) 1,685,422
3	Plastic Beverage Bottles 940,170
4	Plastic Bottle Caps 847,972
5	Straws, Stirrers 555,007
6	Plastic Grocery Bags 441,493
7	Glass Beverage Bottles 394,796
8	Other Plastic Bags 389,088
9	Paper Bags 368,746
10	Beverage Cans 339,170
11	Plastic Lids 312,979
12	Metal Bottle Caps 304,623
13	Plastic Cups & Plates 282,735
14	Plastic Take Out Containers 234,689
15	Other Plastic/Foam Packaging 233,584
16	Forks, Knives, Spoons 193,288
17	Foam Take Out Containers 179,147
18	Foam Cups & Plates 170,414
19	Paper Cups & Plates 132,307
20	Rope 119,833
21	Fishing Line 111,357
22	Other Plastic Bottles (milk, bleach, etc.) 105,228
23	Balloons 52,898



Mattress

Puzzle Piece

Candle

Shopping Cart

Credit Card

Sleeping Bag

Bike Pedal

Vacuum  
Cleaner



Rain Boot

Rubber  
Chicken

Battery

Kite

Wig

Gas Tank

Toothbrush

\$5 Bill



Restaurant  
Menu

Teddy Bear

Baby Doll

Hula Hoop

Fishing Pole

Kitchen Sink

Ballerina Tutu

Light Bulb





Pacifier

Hammer

Toy Car

Laundry  
Basket

Book

Frisbee

Computer  
Keyboard

Toilet Seat



Guitar

Traffic Cone

Marker

Car Bumper

Top Hat

Toaster

Umbrella

Bowling Ball





