

# MARINE DEBRIS PREVENTION

Conducting cleanups is a great way to collect items that have already become marine debris and prevent them from traveling further down the watershed or throughout our ocean. However, cleanups are not a long term solution to the problem of marine debris. If proactive steps are not taken to start to change behavior and address trash before it becomes marine debris, we will continuously have to conduct more and more cleanups. Through increased prevention strategies, cleanups would ideally become unnecessary. Therefore, Talking Trash & Taking Action concludes by engaging participants in a multitude of marine debris prevention strategies.

**“ SAY: Since we have started talking about being Ocean Heroes by preventing trash from entering our waterways, let's discuss prevention further.**

**“ ASK: Can anyone define *prevention* or give us an example of one way to prevent marine debris?**

Prevention: the act or practice of stopping something bad from happening

**“ SAY: Let's start with some simple prevention techniques. Who has heard of the three R's?**

**1. Reduce:** to make smaller or less in amount, degree or size

**We can:** Reduce the amount of trash produced by decreasing the amount of disposable items we use. Replacing a single-use item with a reusable item, such as a water bottle or grocery bag, will reduce the amount of items that could eventually end up in the ocean.

**2. Reuse:** to use again especially in a different way or after reclaiming or reprocessing

**We can:** Find a way to reuse trash instead of throwing it away. Reuse items for the original purpose, repurpose them into something new, or donate them.

**3. Recycle:** to make something new from something that has been used before; to convert waste into a reusable material

**We can:** Learn about all the products that are recyclable in our area. Whether at home, at school or on the go, make sure your plastics, glass, metals, cardboard and papers are properly disposed of in recycling receptacles. To help understand plastics recycling, share the “Recycling Decoder”, found in the back of this book.

**“ ASK: Can you think of more ways to prevent marine debris? Let's list as many prevention ideas as we can.**

To help with this, ask participants to think back to the discussion about marine debris sources and to be creative. Here are some additional examples:

- **Upcycle:** Take something that might have been thrown away or recycled and create something new and better with it. Repurpose it or use it for an art project.
- **Good trash practices:** Always use proper trash and recycling receptacles that are not overfilled. Pick up trash from the ground when you can and never litter.
- **Innovation:** Support establishments that use innovative ways to avoid single-use items, such as utilizing all compostable products or providing pasta, like spaghetti, instead of plastic stirrers for coffee. Or create your own innovative ways to prevent marine debris.
- **Educate others:** Talk to friends and family about what you have learned about marine debris and how to prevent it. We are all responsible for this issue, and we can all help prevent marine debris.
- **Proper Waste Management:** Ensure that trash cans (inside and outside) don't become overfilled so trash won't easily escape.
- **Increased Disposal Availability:** By making proper disposal and removal of trash more available and increasing incentives for proper disposal, waste management companies can help prevent intentional dumping of waste into the marine environment.
- **Storm Water Drainage:** Storm water stenciling programs help control storm water discharge and prevent marine debris from traveling. Also, installing something called a catchment device can trap trash before it enters the storm drain or as it is traveling down streams.
- **Government Action:** Programs and laws enacted and regulated by larger bodies such as government agencies help prevent acts such as marine dumping. One example is the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, now known universally as MARPOL. MARPOL includes regulations aimed at preventing and minimizing pollution, including trash, from ships (International Maritime Organization).



## ACTIVITY: PREVENTION CORNERS

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will examine different prevention methods as they pertain to particular items of marine debris and think creatively on multiple options for marine debris prevention.

### MATERIALS:

- White Debris Deck, can also use Grey Debris Deck, if needed
- Open space or room to clearly divide into four corners
- (Optional) Half sheets of paper to make “signs” to label the four categories: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Other

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pass a marine debris item card to each participant.
2. In an open space, designate four separate spaces or corners and label these the 3 R's: “Reduce”, “Reuse” and “Recycle” plus one “Other” spot.
3. Explain the “Other” corner includes any of the ideas listed a few minutes ago and provides the chance to be creative when thinking about marine debris prevention.
4. Explain to participants that they must choose one of the corners as an alternative outcome for their item, instead of becoming marine debris. For instance, someone with “grocery bag” might choose the “Reduce” corner while someone with “beverage bottle” might choose the “Recycle” group.
5. Provide participants with about 2–3 minutes to move to their desired outcome corner, based on their individual items.

### DISCUSSION:

- Ask each participant to explain his or her choice for that marine debris item. Start in one corner and work around to all four categories. You can prompt students with these questions:

#### “ASK:

- **What is your item?**
  - **Why did you choose this corner?**
  - **If you chose “Reduce” or “Reuse,” how would you reduce/reuse that item in a different way?**
  - **If you chose “Other,” what outcome did you come up with for your item?** This can be as simple or creative as participants wish. For instance, someone with “microwave” may simply state “dispose of responsibly” or a participant with cigarette butts may say “outlaw smoking.”
- Explain to participants there is no right or wrong answer. All of the items could go into multiple categories.
  - (Optional) Provide students an additional 2 minutes to choose a new category for their item and repeat the discussion prompts with a couple of the participants.



# 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.



# 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







