

# Marine Debris



NOAA Marine Debris Program | Office of Response and Restoration | NOAA National Ocean Service

## NOAA Marine Debris Program Pacific Islands Region

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) supports national and international efforts to research, prevent, and reduce the impacts of marine debris. The MDP serves as a centralized capability within NOAA, coordinating and supporting activities within NOAA and with other federal agencies, as well as using partnerships to support projects carried out by state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry. The MDP has headquarters in Silver Spring, MD and has regional staff members positioned around the country to support regional coordination efforts, track progress of projects, review performance measures, and conduct regional marine debris outreach to local audiences. The Program's Pacific Islands regional coordinator is based out of Honolulu, HI.

### American Samoa Post-Tsunami Cleanup

The September 2009 earthquake and tsunami that struck American Samoa caused flooding, damage, and over 30 fatalities. The receding waves pulled tires, roofing material, fabric, and household goods out to sea, where a significant amount sank in shallow coral reef environments in the nearshore. This project has two goals: a short-term goal to remove the tsunami-generated debris from the marine environment around Tutuila Island, American Samoa, using local surveyors and marine salvage contractors and a longer-term goal to reduce the accumulation of trash and potential future impacts from marine debris in the coastal zone. The latter will be accomplished by creating a "Pollution Prevention Squad," which will organize community cleanups and undertake community education and outreach activities. The project anticipates removing about 6 tons of marine debris. Community cleanups are expected to pick up an estimated 15 tons of trash from the coastal environment. This project is funded through the Community-based Marine Debris Removal grant program and carried out by the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources.



Marine debris created by the tsunami damaged coral reef habitat in American Samoa.

### Marine debris is

any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.

### Establishing an Island Culture of Recycling in Saipan

The Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA) created and placed a total of 17 recycling and mixed waste bins for public use and provided trash collection services at popular beach and tourist sites in order to help prevent marine debris. Bins were installed in March

2010 and weekly trash collection began, with support provided by bin “adopters.” In one year, the project has prevented close to 15 tons of trash from becoming marine debris, 43% of which was recycled. In addition, cleanups have removed nearly seven tons of marine debris from eight beach sites. Public service announcements demonstrated how littering on land affects ocean and marine life. The project is also launching a “No Need Bag” campaign to encourage people to shop with reusable bags. This project is funded through the Community-based Marine Debris Removal grant program.



Screenshot from the PSA. Courtesy of MDA Cleanup Crew.

## Guam Marine Debris Prevention and Removal Campaign

Cleanup Crew is a group of volunteers dedicated to cleaning up Guam’s beaches, rivers, and reefs and to raising awareness of marine debris and its effects. To date, the Cleanup Crew has removed over 20 tons of debris. Of that, 58% was recycled. Volunteer numbers have increased to over 600 participants, contributing over 3,000 hours. A public service announcement (PSA) was created to raise awareness about marine debris and its local impact. The PSA is airing at movie theaters and is available for viewing via various social media applications including YouTube (available

at <http://www.mdaguam.com/>). This project is carried out by the MDA Dive Shop with funding from the Community-based Marine Debris Removal grant program.

## Chiefs Approach to Palau’s Marine Debris Reduction

The Palauan Chiefs project, which concluded in 2008, addressed marine debris through a comprehensive, coordinated, republic-wide project. Eleven workshops on marine debris were held, reaching two-thirds of the community. A post-test revealed that 85% of participants increased their knowledge of ways they can prevent and reduce marine debris and where to report marine pollution violations. Of the 16 States targeted, 14 completed cleanups. Dive shops, hotels, resorts, local tour operators, and community members donated a total of 4,298 volunteer hours and removed over 23 tons of debris.

The project also hosted 16 workshops to teach fishermen traditional methods and gear that do not create marine debris. An estimated 7% of fishermen were using indigenous gear after the workshops, and four sites were designated for indigenous fishing techniques. Community meetings were held in all 16 states, with five monofilament recycling centers established at marinas. As of the completion of the project, 850 lbs of monofilament were gathered.

### Marine debris is

a problem we can solve together. Reduce, reuse, recycle, and participate in local beach or stream cleanups. If we each do a little, together we can make a big difference.

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