



Marine Debris Vocabulary List



Marine – found in or produced by the ocean

Debris – trash, scattered pieces of waste.

Ocean – the body of salt water that covers nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the surface of the earth

Plastic - an artificial substance made from oil and chemicals that can be easily shaped when soft. Plastic is formed into many materials and products.

Litter – trash such as plastic, paper, cans, and bottles that are left in a public space.

Oxygen – is air, the stuff we breathe. Oxygen is the most abundant element on earth.

Storm Drain – an opening in a sidewalk, street, or parking lot that carries water away from those areas and drains into a nearby waterway.

Currents – continuous movement of ocean water flowing in a permanent direction.

Gyre – a large system of ocean currents moving in a circle

Great Pacific Garbage Patch – a huge area of marine debris between Hawaii and California. It formed because the ocean currents move in a circle, which makes trash accumulate in the center of the gyre.

Decompose - to break down into soil through chemical change, rot

Biodegradable – a substance that is able to break down into soil

Entanglement – being caught or trapped. Discarded fishing nets are common sources of marine debris entanglement.

Ingestion – eating, taking into the body as food. Discarded plastic bags are common sources of marine debris ingestion.

Plankton – tiny organisms living in water. **Phytoplankton** is composed of plants; **zooplankton** is composed of animals.

Photodegrade – to break down into smaller pieces because of sunlight

Microplastics – very small pieces of plastic that pollute the environment. Any type of plastic piece that is less than 5 mm in length.

Macroplastics – large particles of plastic found in the marine environment

Food chain – a series of organisms in which each uses the next lower member of the series as a food source.

Density – how much stuff you have in a given amount of space.

Buoyancy – the upward force on an object that makes it sink or float in liquid.