

# North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan: 2021 Accomplishments Report

## GOAL 1: LEAD AND COORDINATE

The [North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan](#) (Action Plan) provides a strategic framework for prevention and removal of marine debris along the North Carolina coast. Efforts for applying the Action Plan were led by the leadership team and Advisory and Implementation Committee including its 8 subcommittees.



## GOAL 2: PREVENT



The 9th annual [NC Marine Debris Symposium](#) focused on collaborative and sustainable circular-based solutions to prevent and remove marine debris.

N.C. GreenTravel Initiative listed **eight new** certifications and collaborated with N.C. Clean Marinas Program to develop a **Green Marinas** application.

**Twenty-three** businesses were recruited as Ocean Friendly Establishments and current partnerships were maintained coastwide.

The K-12 Education subcommittee published a [Marine Debris Educator Resource Guide](#) and [Education Strategy](#).

- Partner groups educated **6,940 K-12 students** and an additional **797 educators and professionals** about marine debris. UNCW MarineQuest educated a majority of these K-12 students.

Through Ocean Conservancy, a total of **1,658 volunteers removed 24,661 pounds** of marine debris statewide during this year's International Coastal Cleanup season.

The City of Wilmington unanimously passed a resolution led by [Plastic Ocean Project](#) and Ocean Friendly Establishments to reduce plastic waste within the City.

The Coastal Federation was joined by participants from over 29 countries to learn the latest research on microplastics during the [North Carolina Coastal Microplastics Forum](#).

## GOAL 3: REMOVE

The Coastal Federation led the Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project working with **60 commercial watermen and women to remove 3,009 crab pots** from coastal waters with funding from the N.C. Commercial Fishing License Resource Fund.

The N.C. Division of Coastal Management and the Coastal Federation contracted with watermen and women to remove **838,820 pounds** of large marine debris from public waterways.

Various entities of volunteer groups were involved in marine debris removal projects.

- The Coastal Federation hosted Conservation Corps groups that **removed 8,840 pounds**, and with additional volunteers over the course of 10 cleanup events removed **3,350 pounds** of small-scale debris.
- UNC-Wilmington led an After School Kids Mentoring Experience with about a dozen schools where students were involved in cleanups and accompanying programs.



## GOAL 3: REMOVE (continued)

Wire-framed sculptures filled with marine debris were created at Cape Lookout National Seashore and at Hammocks Beach State Park to promote awareness of marine debris in the environment. The Hammocks Beach was led by Coastal Carolina Riverwatch.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) held a Resource Advisor Training. Resource Advisors serve as field observers during marine debris removal operations and ensure coastal resources are protected and best management practices are followed.

NOAA's [North Carolina Marine Debris Emergency Response Guide](#) was updated and included as a resource document in planning and response procedures for the Departments of Environmental Quality and Emergency Management.

An ArcGIS Online abandoned and derelict vessel inventory map was created and maintained by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission with assistance from the Coastal Federation and Division of Coastal Management.

## GOAL 4: PREVENT AND REMOVE ABANDONED & DERELICT VESSELS

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Coastal Federation and the Division of Coastal Management oversaw the largest coordinated vessel removal operation in North Carolina history, **removing a total of 115 abandoned and derelict vessels.**

If you'd like to report an abandoned or derelict vessel, please take a look at the [ADV database](#) to see if it has already been reported, and report any new findings to [advencwildlife.org](#).



## GOAL 5: RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

N.C. Sea Grant and N.C. State University completed sampling for their [research project](#) aimed at understanding how much macro- and microplastic is being delivered through the Neuse River to the Pamlico Sound.

- Partners include the University of N.C. Wilmington, Plastic Ocean Project and Sound Rivers.

Students from [Duke Engage worked](#) with N.C. Sea Grant, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Coastal Federation to summarize existing N.C. trash clean-up data from the Marine Debris Tracker app and the Ocean Conservancy.

Waterkeepers Carolina with its member organizations launched a [two-year study](#) to better understand the volume of microplastics and macroplastic pollution in North Carolina.

As part of the [Water Quality for Fisheries project](#), the [Coastal Carolina Riverwatch](#), with assistance from East Carolina University's Center for Survey Research, surveyed commercial and recreational fishermen to better understand their water quality concern for fisheries.

## ADVISORY & IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

These logos represent partners in the Advisory & Implementation Committee, but not all involved in Subcommittees.



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