



North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan: 2022 Accomplishments Report

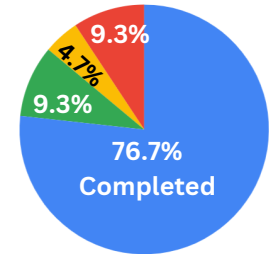
LEAD AND COORDINATE

The [North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan](#) (Action Plan) provides a strategic framework for prevention and removal of marine debris along the N.C. coast.

- Eight subcommittees, including a Leadership Team, met throughout the year to develop and implement projects, as well as facilitate and track the plan's progress.
- Since its establishment in 2020 approximately 76 % of actions outlined within the 5-year plan have been accomplished.

Action Plan Progress

• Completed • In Progress • Ongoing • Not Started



PREVENTION

Educators at the N.C. Aquarium on Roanoke Island, Jennette's Pier, N.C. Coastal Federation (Coastal Federation), and UNCW Marine Quest collectively educated **7,651 K-12 students and 2,560 educators** about marine debris.



Photo by Joe Huie

The N.C. Marine Debris Symposium and Coastal Carolina Riverwatch brought together marine debris stakeholders from all over North Carolina for three days of collaboration, networking, and solution development.

Incorporating marine debris research into public outreach and education efforts, Coastal Carolina Riverwatch, Duke University Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, and N.C. Marine Debris Symposium hosted the N.C. Plastic Policy Workshop.

All three Topsail Island towns and the Town of Wrightsville Beach now prohibit using unencapsulated polystyrene, commonly called Styrofoam, for floating docks, piers and walkways.

- These ordinances were put in place when town officials took action after learning about the Coastal Federation's large-scale marine debris removal and the resulting Resilient Docks and Piers Report.

Don't Waste Durham's ReCirculation Project recognized the GreenToGo reusable container system which provides customers with durable to-go containers to be returned, washed, and reused at participating establishments.

The N.C. Aquarium at Roanoke Island and Jennette's Pier collected items to be recycled through Terracycle, preventing them from entering the waste stream. In 2022, they collected: 20.9 lbs. of Cigarette Butts, 6.45 lbs. of Fruit Squeeze Pouches, and 8.65 lbs. of Colgate Oral Care Program.



Photo by Coastal Federation

REMOVAL

N.C. Plastic Waste Reduction Coalition capitalized on successful statewide social media initiative, **#NCBeyondPlastic**, during Beyond Plastic Week of Action.

The Coastal Federation embarked on the eighth year of the Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project working with 48 commercial fishers to **remove 1,983 lost crab pots**.

- The Coastal Federation's marine debris team worked with watermen and women and contractors to remove **326.59 tons (652,180 pounds)** of large-scale marine debris.
- Additionally, over the course of eight cleanup events, volunteers helped remove **1,200 pounds** of small-scale debris.



Photo by Coastal Federation

REMOVAL (continued)

Topsail Island started rewarding businesses that take action to reduce debris, encourage alternatives to single use plastics, and create awareness of the impacts of polystyrene and ways to reduce its use through their **Beach Clean Initiative**.

- This project provides educational messaging, supports Ocean Friendly Establishments, and encourages the use of encapsulated polystyrene.



Photo by Brian Yurasits

PREVENT AND REMOVE ABANDONED & DERELICT VESSELS



Photo by Coastal Federation

In 2022, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Coastal Federation, and N.C. Division of Coastal Management oversaw the **removal of a total of 95 abandoned and derelict vessels**.

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission continues to maintain and update the state-wide Abandoned and Derelict Vessels database as vessel removal projects are completed and new vessels are reported.

RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT

N.C. Sea Grant and N.C. State University, in cooperation with Sound Rivers, Plastic Ocean Project and the University of Birmingham (UK), sampled and tested 90 water samples at 15 stations located throughout the Neuse River watershed to understand microplastics in our waterways.

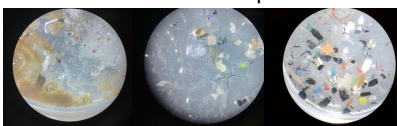


Photo by Kayla West, Plastic Ocean Project

- Every sample contained microplastics, and over 150 unique synthetic compounds were identified.
- Polyethylene, polypropylene and polystyrene were the top three types of plastics found, with various other chemicals found including resins, paint and sealants.

As part of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration-facilitated [Southeast Marine Debris Action Plan](#), N.C. Sea Grant contributed to the creation of "**Tangled in Trash**" - the first reporting tool designed to document when and where marine debris harms animals in the Carolinas and Georgia. Anyone can join the project and submit an observation by [downloading the app](#) through Anecdota.

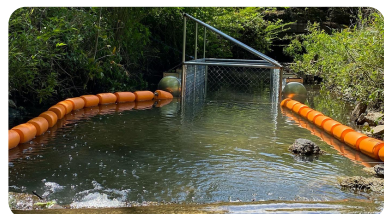


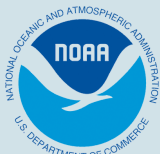
Photo by Coastal Carolina Riverwatch

Coastal Carolina Riverwatch partnered with the City of Jacksonville's Stormwater Program to reduce the amount of macroplastics by deploying a 'Trash Trout' on Scales Creek, a tributary of the New River.

- Through 12 data collections, a total of 435 items, polystyrene being the most common, have been removed and discarded.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

These logos represent partners who participated in the Leadership Team in 2022. Many additional organizations not identified here were engaged in Subcommittees and continue to support the actions of the plan. We welcome others to join the efforts! We cannot do it alone. Please email sarajh@nc coast.org if interested.



Stay connected through our Debris Free NC pages on Facebook and Instagram!