

Handling Plastics in Fishing Nets



The Journey of Plastics into Our Oceans

Plastics enter the oceans through various channels, including improper waste disposal, littering on beaches, and plastic waste from industries. Fishing gear, such as nets, ropes, and buoys, often contributes significantly to marine plastic pollution. As plastics break down, they become microplastics (MPs) (1 micron - 5 mm size), which further pose serious threats



Key Fact to Remember:

Over 460 million metric tons of plastic are produced annually for various uses, projected to rise to 712 million metric tons by 2040 (IUCN, 2024). Each year, 8 to 10 million metric tons of plastic enter the oceans, constituting 80% of marine pollution



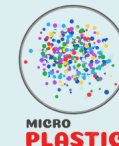
Fishers can reduce plastics by collecting debris during their routine work and properly disposing of it.

The role of every fisher is critical in ensuring that plastics do not pollute the oceans and damage the fishing industry.



Impact of Plastics on the Ocean:

Marine Life Threats: Marine animals often mistake plastics especially MPs for food, leading to physical damage, chemical leaching, false satiety, reduced swimming performance, oxidative stress, and behavioral changes, ultimately leading to stress and death..



Chemical Contamination:

Plastics often contain harmful chemicals that can leach into the water, affecting the health of marine life. These chemicals can accumulate in the bodies of marine animals, leading to long-term health problems and disrupting ecosystems.



Entanglement of Marine Animals:

Large pieces of plastic, like fishing nets and six-pack rings, often entangle marine life, causing suffocation, lacerations, or even drowning. This is a direct threat to species such as whales, seals, and sea turtles, which can get trapped in abandoned or lost fishing gear.

Impacts on Fishing and Tourism

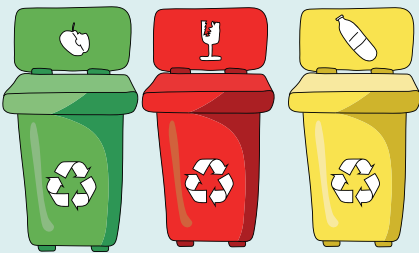
Industries: Plastic pollution affects the fishing industry by damaging fishing gear, reducing catches, and increasing cleaning and maintenance costs. It also has a negative impact on tourism, as polluted beaches and waters deter visitors, harming local economies that depend on beach tourism and activities.





What Can You Do as a Fisher?

- **Collect and Return Plastics:**
Collect Plastics found in your fishing gear and on the shore.
- Segregate the Fish catch and plastics
- Return Plastics to local disposal points or designated collection centers, where they can be properly recycled or disposed of.
- **Ensure Safe Disposal:** Avoid burning plastics or leaving them on the coast. Return them to your community or port for collection.
- **Proper Net Maintenance:**
Regularly clean your nets to remove plastic debris. Consider using biodegradable ropes and nets to reduce the impact of plastics.

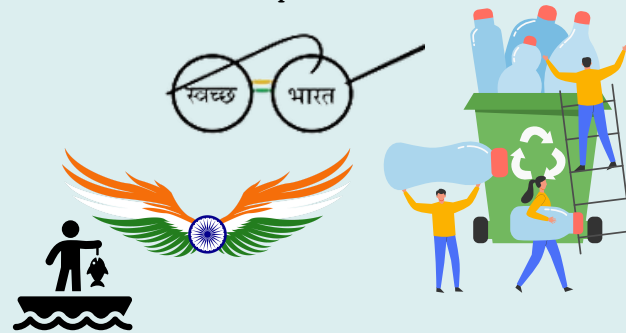


"Your actions today protect our oceans tomorrow"



By properly disposing of plastic waste and reducing pollution, fishers play a vital role in preserving marine ecosystems for future generations. This not only ensures healthier fish stocks, which benefits the fishing industry, but also helps the government meet environmental goals, reducing the strain on waste management systems and fostering a cleaner, more sustainable future. It's a win-win situation where both the community and the environment thrive together.

Encourage others to join in the efforts, creating a community approach to tackle ocean plastic pollution.



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Things to Do While Collecting Plastics from the Ocean/Shore:

- **Do not leave plastics on the shore or throw them back into the ocean.**

• **Wear Protective Gear:**

Always wear gloves and boots to avoid direct contact with plastics and sharp objects like broken bottles or fishing lines.

Consider using masks or face shields if handling chemicals or unsafe debris.

• **Use Proper Collection Tools:**

Use nets, bags, or containers to safely gather plastics from the water without further disturbing marine life.

- **Avoid using hands directly** to handle hazardous materials like fishing nets or sharp objects.

- Separate Plastics for Recycling

• **Properly Dispose** of Collected Plastics: Return collected plastics to designated recycling or disposal points immediately.

- Follow **Local Waste Disposal Guidelines**

- Report Large or Hazardous Debris:

If you encounter large amounts of plastic or hazardous materials, report them to the local authorities for proper removal.

• **Follow Safety Protocols:**

If you find any dangerous objects (e.g., chemicals or unknown substances), avoid handling them and contact appropriate services.

