



Marine Litter Issues Overview

WFO tracks the latest news and developments on marine litter to bring you its monthly overview on the issue. Working on solutions? Send us your story to be in next month's edition!



A volunteer hard at work at Versova Beach



Versova Resident Volunteers joining forces during the cleanups

Mumbai citizenship action becomes historic cleanup

What began as a small act of citizenship has led to the largest collection in history taking place in Mumbai, gaining visibility with the help of a video released this month by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

Afroz Shah is the 33-year-old lawyer who launched the 'Clean Up Versova' campaign in October 2015 which has since brought together over 500 residents in helping clean up the Versova Beach in the most populated city in India. "We have given up our sleep and our free time because nothing is more important than protecting our oceans and holding them in trust for future generations" he states.

The cleanup caught the attention of the United Nations Patron of the Oceans, Lewi Pugh, who features in UNEP's video calling for action. Pugh commented that despite visiting beaches all over the world, he had never seen litter on this scale before.

The video was filmed on August 6 and 7 and over two million kilograms of litter had already been cleared from the beach when the film was uploaded on August 9th. Citizens actively responded to the video and the cleanups continue to be underway every week.

Government agencies have said they will join the program, such as the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) who will join on September 17th to commemorate International Coastal Cleanup Day. Municipal authorities have also been assisting and in June provided machines to the cleanup operation.

Watch the video [here](#)

Sources: [The Guardian](#), [hindustantimes](#) and [infrastructurene.ws](#)

Mumbai cleanup in pictures



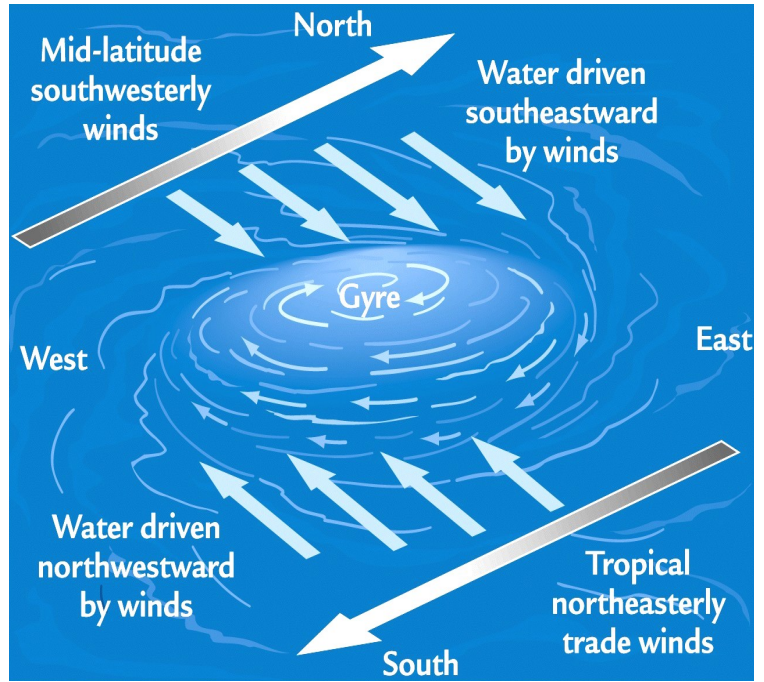
Versova Beach in Mumbai, shared on August 6th by active local citizen Gaurav (Twitter: [@Gaurav_bs](#))



The beach after a five-hour cleanup, almost 300 tons of litter collected, shared on August 6 by Gaurav (Twitter: [@Gaurav_bs](#))



Trash4Treats paddleboard sessions (Picture: Kiko Matthews/SUPKiko)



Formation of a subtropical gyre

Paddleboard classes incorporate cleanup actions to its curriculum

A stand-up paddleboard (SUP) instructor in London created Trash4Treats, an initiative offering discounted lessons to those willing to participate in a two-hour litter collection on paddleboards on the waterways around Hackney Wick. Participants have the mission to collect at least ten pieces of trash which they are then able to exchange for a refreshment from The Milk Float café which can vary from a drink, cake, ice cream and more. The cleanup can be done on a stand-up paddleboard or on a canoe.

Kiko Matthews of SUPKiko has been teaching paddleboard classes on canals in the London Borough of Hackney and decided to do something about the dire state of the polluted waterways. She teamed up with Alfie Hatt and Katy Hogarth, the co-owners of The Milk Float café and Moo Canoes, a kayak and canoe rental shop, to motivate people to help with cleanups while learning a new skill and having fun. 'I couldn't pass the litter 8 times a day and ignore the packaging and plastic, and soon it became a bit obsessive,' says Kiko.

Source: [Metro](#)

New findings show litter from gyres always comes back to shores

Findings from a new study show that ocean currents that concentrate marine litter into ocean gyres ultimately bring the waste back to shore. The study, "Origin and fate of surface drift in the oceanic convergence zones of the eastern Pacific", recently published in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*, analyzed the surface pathways in certain regions of the Pacific Ocean. The researchers found outward bound currents flowing away from the gyre and toward coastlines in North and South America. Previously, scientists believed that once litter was sucked into these ocean gyres, they remained there.

"Our study has shown the existence of exit routes for debris in the South Pacific Ocean, a region where it was once thought that that drifters can converge but not escape during their lifetimes," explained Christophe Maes, co-author of the study and a physical oceanographer at France's University of Western Brittany (UBO) and the French Research Institute for Development (IRD).

Scientists welcome the new information, stating that better understanding the distribution of ocean litter will help optimize cleanups, concentrating efforts along coastlines.

Sources: [Smithsonian](#) and [Geophysical Research Letters](#)



Weaving strips of plastic and cotton using traditional techniques



Turning plastic bags into designer furniture



The "Grammys" collection is inspired by a chair owned by one of their grandmothers

Combining Egypt's plastic bag waste and traditional weaving techniques

Two designers have found a way to turn Egypt's plastic bag waste problem into colorful furniture by using traditional Egyptian weaving techniques.

Mariam Hazem and Hend Riad initiated the project when they wanted to find a solution to Egypt's litter problem and lack of recycling by finding a way to reuse plastic bags. They developed a method to turn plastic bags into long thread to be used to create colorful furniture such as stools and accessories such as bags. The long strips of plastic are threaded into a handloom and woven together with fabric. The finished material is therefore composed of 67% plastics and 33% recycled cotton.

The designers collect plastic bags from friends and family and also use flawed bags unfit for sale. At the moment, the designers are unable to use bags from landfills due to their poor condition and the need for a cost-efficient method of sterilizing the bags.

"From the outset, our goal was to make a product with an educational message," says Hend. "In fact, our products have helped stir a discussion how you can convert things that some consider trash into something of value."

Sources: [Planet Experts](#) and [CityLab](#)

British Columbia's largest cleanup

British Columbia, Canada, organized its biggest coastal cleaning event in August. This historic cleanup will use the remaining funds from a \$1 million donation from Japan to help manage tsunami marine debris following the ravaging earthquake that hit Japan in March 2011.

Many cleanup organizations are participating throughout the month. The bags of debris collected will be dropped into a dedicated barge with the help of a helicopter. The barge will then carry the litter to Richmond to be recycled.

Source: [Westerly News](#)



A 100-meter barge for major a shoreline cleanup