

Marine Litter Guidelines for Tourists and Tour Operators in Marine and Coastal Areas



N O W P A P

Northwest Pacific Action Plan



October 2007

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These guidelines were prepared by the Special Monitoring and Coastal Environment Assessment Regional Activity Centre of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP CEARAC) within the framework of the Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) project, which was approved by the 10th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting in November 2005.

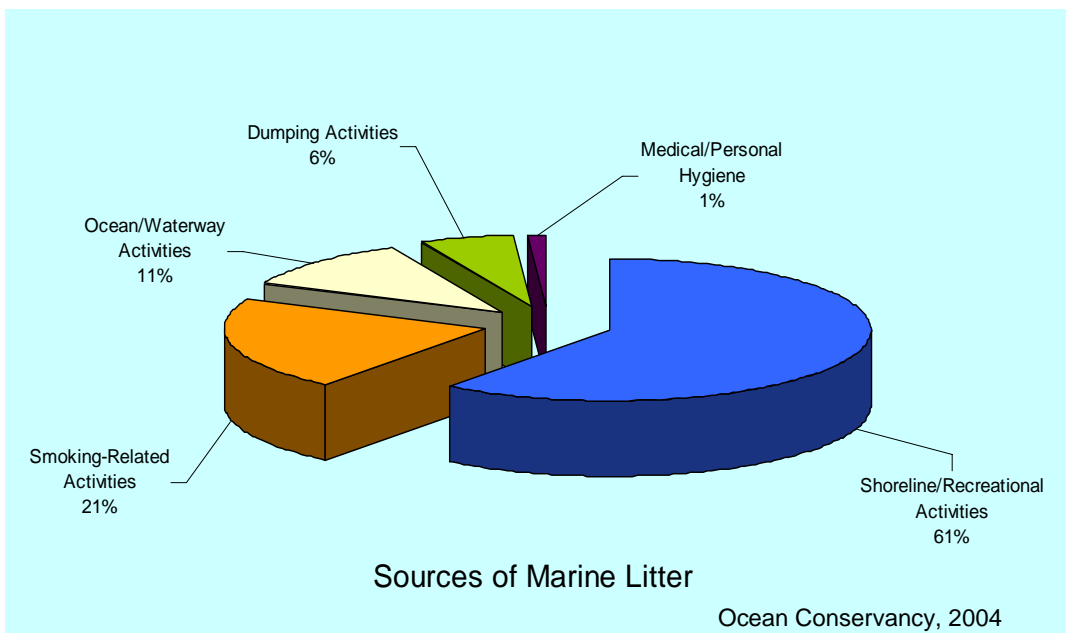


1. Introduction

Marine litter is a serious global environmental problem. It is not only aesthetically unpleasant, but also has serious adverse impacts on marine and coastal environments, human health, marine navigation and so on.

Tourism, especially in the coastal and marine areas, is also heavily affected by marine litter, since the attraction of tourists to these areas usually relies on beautiful landscapes, pristine beaches and healthy marine environments.

Although marine litter is known to originate from various land- and sea-based human activities, tourism in marine and coastal areas is also a major contributor of such litter. Data from worldwide marine-litter surveys conducted by the Ocean Conservancy (a non-governmental organization), indicate that more than 60% of marine litter originates from shoreline and recreational activities. This trend will not improve unless tourists stop littering, particularly as tourism in the coastal and marine areas is expected to grow significantly in the foreseeable future.



In recognition of the expected growth in tourism and the negative impacts of tourists on the marine environment, these guidelines were prepared to help reduce tourist-generated marine litter. The guidelines provide a synopsis on marine litter, its known adverse impacts and best-practice tips for tourists involved in marine recreational activities (cruising, fishing, diving, etc.) and coastal recreational activities (camping, barbequing, bathing, etc.). The guidelines also suggest activities that tour operators can adopt to reduce tourist-generated marine litter.

2. Types of Marine Litter Found in Marine and Coastal Areas

Many types of marine litter can be found in marine and coastal areas. Such litter is commonly comprised of materials that degrade very slowly, such as various plastic products, polystyrene foam, metal and glass fragments. More specifically, tourist-derived litter commonly includes food wrappings, beverage cans and bottles, cigarette filters, plastic bags and fishing lines.

These types of litter do not necessarily stay in the local area around their source; they can be transported to distant locations through wind, ocean currents and waves, and subsequently pollute other beaches and shores. Such litter is also found in the water column and on the seafloor.





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