



# Dive Against Debris®

## Marine Debris Identification Guide



**A Resource for Scuba Divers Completing  
Dive Against Debris® Surveys**



# Dive Against Debris®

## Marine Debris Identification Guide

### Acknowledgements

Project AWARE Foundation thanks Seba Sheavly for her invaluable input into the creation of the Dive Against Debris® program. For over twenty years Seba has been a leading figure in the battle against marine debris having edited or contributed to major marine debris reports from UNEP, UNESCO, GESAMP, US EPA, and the National Academy of Sciences. As principal of Sheavly Consultants she has provided advisory services to institutions including the European Commission, NOAA Marine Debris and the Ocean Conservancy.

Very sadly Seba passed away in June 2012 during the writing of Version 2.0 of the Dive Against Debris® Survey Guide. Project AWARE hopes the Dive Against Debris® program is seen as a fitting tribute to Seba, who worked tirelessly for a clean ocean.

To download a free PDF of this document, learn more about Project AWARE Foundation, and submit comments or suggestions about this, or other Project AWARE products or programs, please visit [www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org)

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# Dive Against Debris®

## Marine Debris Identification Guide

Project AWARE's Dive Against Debris® program is a global survey of underwater rubbish in our ocean. Created by divers for divers, Dive Against Debris® turns your underwater cleanup into a marine debris survey.

The **Dive Against Debris® Marine Debris Identification Guide** provides a visual reference for divers reporting marine debris removed from underwater during Dive Against Debris® surveys. This guide also contains many useful tips to help you accurately complete your Dive Against Debris® Data Card.

To learn how to complete Dive Against Debris® surveys please refer to the **Dive Against Debris® Survey Guide**. The Survey Guide is required reading for anyone reporting underwater marine debris through Dive Against Debris®.

Download all Dive Against Debris® resources and submit your data in English here:

[www.projectaware.org/DiveAgainstDebris](http://www.projectaware.org/DiveAgainstDebris)

If you would like to submit your data in a language other than English, simply email your completed Data Card to:

[diveagainstdebris@projectaware.org](mailto:diveagainstdebris@projectaware.org)

Divers around the world are taking action to protect our ocean and its wildlife from harmful marine debris through the Dive Against Debris® program. Join the Project AWARE movement here:

[www.projectaware.org](http://www.projectaware.org)



# Dive Against Debris®

## Marine Debris Identification Guide

### Fast Find Index

Marine debris items are grouped by their main material of construction, and then in alphabetical order.

#### PLASTIC MATERIALS

01. bags: grocery/retail (plastic)
02. bags: trash (plastic)
03. bait containers/packaging
04. balloons
05. balls
06. baskets, crates
07. beverage bottles: less than 2 litres (plastic)
08. beverage bottles: 2 litres or more (plastic)
09. bottles: bleach, cleaner
10. bottles: oil/lube
11. buckets, drums & jerrycans: 2 litres or more
12. buoys & floats (plastic & foamed)
13. caps & lids (plastic)
14. carpet (synthetic)
15. cigarette filters
16. cigarette lighters
17. cigar tips
18. containers: fast food, lunch boxes & similar
19. cotton bud sticks
20. cups, plates, forks, knives, spoons (plastic)
21. diapers/nappies
22. fishing: line
23. fishing: lures, rods/poles
24. fishing: nets & pieces of nets
25. fishing: traps & pots
26. foam insulation & packaging
27. food wrappers (plastic)
28. furnishings (plastic)
29. gloves (latex)
30. light sticks/cyalumes
31. mesh bags: fruit, vegetable, shellfish
32. pipes (plastic/PVC)
33. rope (plastic/nylon)
34. Scuba & snorkel gear, masks, snorkels, fins
35. sheeting: tarpaulin, plastic sheets, palette wrap
36. six-pack rings, ring carriers
37. strapping bands (plastic)
38. straws, stirrers
39. syringes (plastic)
40. tampon applicators
41. tobacco packaging & wrappers
42. toothbrushes
43. plastic fragments

#### GLASS & CERAMIC MATERIALS

44. beverage bottles (glass)
45. buoys (glass)
46. cups, plates, tableware, dishes (glass & ceramic)
47. fluorescent light tubes
48. jars: food (glass)
49. light globes: bulbs, etc
50. syringes (glass)
51. glass & ceramic fragments

## Dive Against Debris® Marine Debris Identification Guide

### Fast Find Index continued

#### METAL MATERIALS

- 52. aerosol/spray cans
- 53. appliances: household
- 54. batteries: AA, AAA, C & D, 6V, 9V, etc
- 55. batteries: car or boat
- 56. beverage cans (aluminum)
- 57. cans: food, juice, other (tin)
- 58. caps & lids (metal)
- 59. cars & car parts
- 60. cups, plates, tableware, dishes (metal)
- 61. drums: 55 gallon
- 62. fishing: sinkers, lures, hooks
- 63. fishing: traps & pots
- 64. forks, knives, spoons (cutlery)
- 65. gas bottles/cylinder, drums: more than 4 litres
- 66. pipes & rebar
- 67. pull tabs: beverages
- 68. Scuba weights
- 69. strapping bands (metal)
- 70. wire, wire mesh, barbed wire
- 71. wrappers (foil/metal)
- 72. metal fragments

#### RUBBER MATERIALS

- 73. condoms
- 74. gloves (rubber)
- 75. inner-tubes & rubber sheets
- 76. rubber bands
- 77. tires/tyres
- 78. rubber fragments

#### WOOD MATERIALS

- 79. fishing: traps & pots
- 80. furnishings (wood)
- 81. lumber (processed or cut/milled wood)
- 82. pallets
- 83. wood fragments

#### CLOTH MATERIALS

- 84. bags (burlap/hessian)
- 85. bags (cloth)
- 86. gloves (cloth)
- 87. rope & string (cloth)
- 88. towels, rags
- 89. cloth fragments

#### PAPER/CARDBOARD MATERIALS

- 90. bags (paper)
- 91. cardboard: packaging & cartons
- 92. paper: books, newspapers, magazines, etc
- 93. paper/cardboard fragments

#### MIXED MATERIALS

- 94. bricks, cinderblocks, chunks of cement
- 95. clothing
- 96. computer equipment & other electronic devices
- 97. fireworks
- 98. shoes, flip flops, sandals, tennis, etc
- 99. tampons
- 100. toys

# Plastic Materials

Find **plastic** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.



© Danica Devery-Smith/Marine Photobank

**01. bags: grocery/retail (plastic)**



© Danica Devery-Smith/Marine Photobank

**02. bags: trash (plastic)**



© Danica Devery-Smith/Marine Photobank

© Sheavly Consultants

**03. bait containers/packaging**



© Sheavly Consultants

**04. balloons**



© Sheavly Consultants

**05. balls**



© Junichi Sugishita

© Junichi Sugishita

**06. baskets, crates**



Dive Against Debris® is a survey of underwater marine debris created for scuba divers

# Plastic Materials



© Sheavly Consultants

**07. beverage bottles: less than 2 litres (plastic)**



© Junichi Sugishita

**08. beverage bottles: 2 litres or more (plastic)**



© Sheavly Consultants

**09. bottles: bleach, cleaner**



© Sheavly Consultants

**10. bottles: oil/lube**



© Junichi Sugishita

© Junichi Sugishita

**11. buckets, drums & jerrycans: 2 litres or more**



© Sheavly Consultants

© Dave Peake/Marine Photobank

**12. buoys & floats (plastic and foamed)**

# Plastic Materials



Only report debris found by divers  
underwater through Dive Against Debris®



© Sheavly Consultants

**13. caps & lids (plastic)**



© Martin Child, Getty Images

**14. carpet (synthetic)**



© Ocean Conservancy

**15. cigarette filters**



© Sheavly Consultants

**16. cigarette lighters**



© Ocean Conservancy

**17. cigar tips**



© Ocean Conservancy

**18. containers: fast food, lunch boxes & similar**



Can't find your debris item here?  
List under "Other Debris Items" on the  
Dive Against Debris® Data Card

# Plastic Materials



19. cotton bud sticks



20. cups, plates, forks, knives, spoons (plastic)



21. diapers/nappies



22. fishing: line



23. fishing: lures, rods/poles



24. fishing: nets & pieces of nets

# Plastic Materials



Count each individual item as 1 on your Dive Against Debris® Data Card, regardless of its size



© Ofir Avny, Marine Photobank

25. fishing: traps & pots



© Steve Gorton, Getty Images

© Steve Gorton, Getty Images

© Steve Gorton, Getty Images

26. foam insulation & packaging



© CC BY-SA 3.0

© CC BY-SA 3.0

27. food wrappers (plastic)



© Zac Allan CC BY-SA 3.0

28. furnishings (plastic)



© CC BY-SA 3.0

29. gloves (latex)



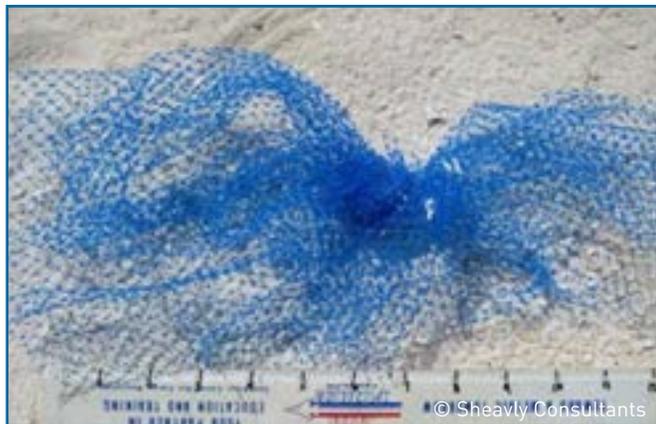
© Sheavly Consultants

30. light sticks/cyalumes



List miscellaneous pieces as "fragments"  
- see the end of each material category  
on the Dive Against Debris® Data Card

# Plastic Materials



**31. mesh bags: fruit, vegetable, shellfish**



**32. pipes (plastic/PVC)**



**33. rope (plastic/nylon)**



**34. Scuba & snorkel gear, masks, snorkels, fins**



**35. sheeting: tarpaulin, plastic sheets, palette wrap**



**36. six-pack rings, ring carriers**

# Plastic Materials



When reporting Number of Participants, only include divers collecting rubbish underwater in your total



© Quinn Packaging

37. strapping bands (plastic)



© Sheavly Consultants

38. straws, stirrers



© Ocean Conservancy

39. syringes (plastic)



© CC BY-SA 3.0

40. tampon applicators



© Ocean Conservancy

41. tobacco packaging & wrappers



© Sheavly Consultants

42. toothbrushes

Any unidentifiable piece of plastic that does not belong in the groups above

43. plastic fragments

# Glass & Ceramic Materials

Find **glass & ceramic** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.



**44. beverage bottles (glass)**



**45. buoys (glass)**



**46. cups, plates, tableware, dishes (glass & ceramic)**



**47. fluorescent light tubes**



**48. jars: food (glass)**



**49. light globes: bulbs, etc**

# Glass & Ceramic Materials



50. syringes (glass)

Any unidentifiable piece of glass & ceramic that does not belong in the groups above

51. glass & ceramic fragments

## Too Small to Count?

Sometimes you may remove a large amount of similar small pieces of debris, for example a mound of plastic pellets dumped in the ocean or a hard plastic item that has disintegrated into many small pieces. In these cases there may be too many pieces to count, so how do you record this find?

The method for many small pieces (mostly smaller than 2.5cm/1in) is to place them on a tarpaulin out of the wind and sort them into roughly equal sized piles. Then count the number of pieces in one of your piles and multiply this by the number of piles to reach the total. Record these small pieces as "fragments" under the relevant material of construction.



# Metal Materials

Find **metal** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.



© Sheavly Consultants

**52. aerosol/spray cans**



**53. appliances: household**



© CC BY-SA 3.0

**54. batteries: AA, AAA, C & D, 6V, 9V, etc**



© CC BY-SA 3.0

**55. batteries: car or boat**



© Ocean Conservancy

**56. beverage cans (aluminium)**



© Myke 2020, CC BY-SA 3.0

**57. cans: food, juice, other (tin)**

# Metal Materials



Sorting and recording your debris happens quickly when everyone works together



© Mateusz Wi niewski CC BY-SA 3.0

**58. caps & lids (metal)**



© Getty Images

© CC BY-SA 3.0

**59. cars & car parts**



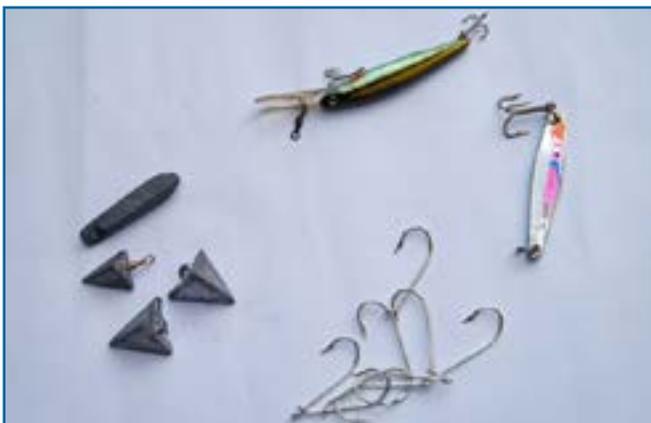
Maria Toutoudaki, Getty Images

**60. cups, plates, tableware, dishes (metal)**



© Ocean Conservancy

**61. drums: 55 gallon**



**62. fishing: sinkers, lures, hooks**



© Valerie Craig, Marine Photobank

**63. fishing: traps & pots**



Take lots of photos - your pictures help explain your data and tell the story of your action

# Metal Materials



64. forks, knives, spoons (cutlery)



65. gas bottles/cylinder, drums: more than 4 litres



66. pipes & rebar



67. pull tabs: beverages



68. Scuba weights



69. strapping bands (metal)

# Metal Materials



70. wire, wire mesh, barbed wire



71. wrappers (foil/metal)

**Any unidentifiable piece of metal that does not belong in the groups above**

72. metal fragments



## **Before submitting data you will be asked to confirm the Dive Against Debris® Surveyor Statement:**

I have read the **Dive Against Debris® Survey Guide** and the data I am reporting was collected underwater, during one dive and completed by single or multiple buddy teams. I understand I should only include data on trash collected from underwater environments here. Repeat dives should be reported through separate submissions and debris collected on land can be shared with the My Ocean community. I understand that the data I submit will be visualized on the Dive Against Debris® Map following a review and provided it satisfies Project AWARE's internal quality review process.

# Rubber Materials

Find **rubber** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.



73. condoms



74. gloves (rubber)



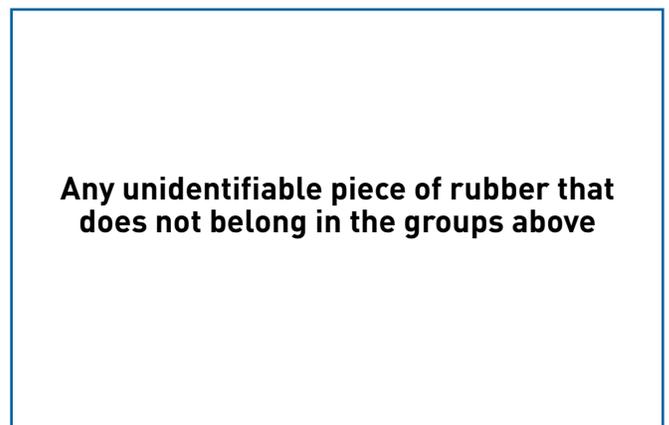
75. inner-tubes & rubber sheets



76. rubber bands



77. tires/tyres



78. rubber fragments

# Wood Materials

Find **wood** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.



© Amy Uhrin, NOAA, Marine Photobank

**79. fishing: traps & pots**



© JP Greenwood/Getty Images

**80. furnishings (wood)**



© Sheavly Consultants

**81. lumber (processed or cut/milled wood)**



**82. pallets**

**Any unidentifiable piece of wood that does not belong in the groups above**

**83. wood fragments**

Find **cloth** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.

# Cloth Materials



84. bags (burlap/hessian)



85. bags (cloth)



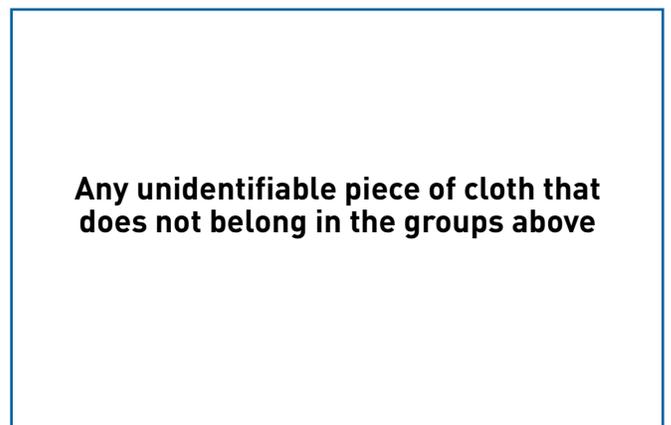
86. gloves (cloth)



87. rope & string (cloth) - note: rope from natural materials has a fibrous appearance



88. towels, rags



**Any unidentifiable piece of cloth that does not belong in the groups above**

89. cloth fragments

# Paper/Cardboard Materials

Find **paper and cardboard** marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.



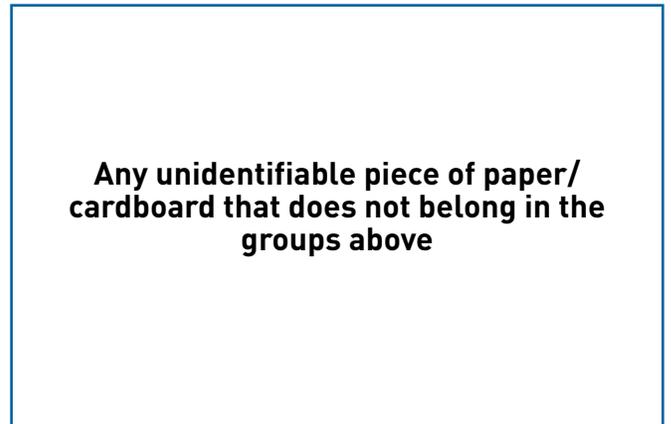
90. bags (paper)



91. cardboard: packaging & cartons



92. paper: books, newspapers, magazines, etc



**Any unidentifiable piece of paper/  
cardboard that does not belong in the  
groups above**

93. paper/cardboard fragments

## Survey Duration

Take care to properly record your Survey Duration as incorrect entries will devalue your findings.

- **Survey Duration is the average time spent by all buddy teams while underwater removing marine debris**
- **Record Survey Duration in minutes i.e. 45 minutes, 115 minutes**
- **Do not include time for surface swims and ascents/descents**
- **Do not include time for non-dive participants or for sorting and recording your debris**

See page 20 of the **Dive Against Debris® Survey Guide** for examples on calculating Survey Duration.



Find **mixed** material marine debris items in this section. List each item as 1 on your Data Card.

If you cannot find an item listed here, record it under **Other Items**.

# Mixed Materials



© Hal Bergman, Getty Images

**94. bricks, cinderblocks, chunks of cement**



© NorwegianMarcus CC BY-SA 3.0

**95. clothing**



© Junichi Sugishita

**96. computer equipment & other electronic devices**



© Bluemoon Stock, Getty Images

**97. fireworks**



© Sheavly Consultants

**98. shoes, flip flops, sandals, tennis, etc**



© Getty Images

**99. tampons**

# Mixed Materials



Dive Against Debris® is a survey of underwater marine debris created for scuba divers



© Junichi Sugishita

100. toys



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## Thanks for protecting our ocean planet!

Report your Dive Against Debris® data here (English language only):

[www.projectaware.org/DiveAgainstDebrisData](http://www.projectaware.org/DiveAgainstDebrisData)

For all languages other than English, simply email your completed Data Card to:

[DiveAgainstDebris@projectaware.org](mailto:DiveAgainstDebris@projectaware.org)

Send your comments and suggestions to:

[DiveAgainstDebris@projectaware.org](mailto:DiveAgainstDebris@projectaware.org)