

# Socio-economic costs of marine litter



Evidence of **plastic marine litter** have been found in every ocean, posing diverse threats to marine ecosystems. In order to fully assess the impacts of plastic in the environment it is important assess and estimate socio-economic costs. These costs are often associated with **beach, underwater or ocean cleanups; loss of tourism revenue, fishing for litter schemes; transport and logistic costs; loss of days at sea due to entangled propellers and costs of recycling materials** (Mouat et al., 2010; Jang et al., 2014; UNEP, 2017).

Several reports and papers point out that inaction leads to rising economic, social and environmental costs at local, national and international levels (UNEP, 2017; Watkins and Brink, 2017). Costs associated with about 300 vessels with propellers entangled in plastic in the United Kingdom in 2008 ranged between **€830,000-2,189,000** (Watkins and Brink, 2017). The same report highlights that collection of municipal waste was estimated to cost €30-126 per tonne per household per year **for non-recyclable waste** and **€200-300 per tonne for light packaging materials** in **EU countries** with data from 2002. Total costs of marine litter for the EU fishing fleet ascent to **€61.7 million per year** (Watkins and Brink, 2017).

In relation to tourism, the presence of marine litter on beaches might contribute to a reduction of revenue, directly expressed by a substantial reduction of visitors (Jang et al., 2014).

These are the unspoken impacts of marine litter that can affect small communities worldwide, particularly coastal communities and small island nations (Diez et al., 2019).

## References

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