

What are Nurdles?

Nurdles are small plastic pellets which, when melted together, are used by industry to make nearly all our plastic products.



How do they end up at sea?

- Nurdles are lost at sea from ships or at port when being handled
- Nurdles spilt on land at industrial facilities float off down drains and ultimately, out to sea.

Currents and wind disperse them and they are now washing up on beaches across the globe. Beaches across Scotland are accumulating them in worryingly large numbers.

Why are nurdles harmful?

Like other plastics in our sea, nurdles ...

- attract and concentrate environmental pollutants like DDT and PCBs to highly toxic levels
- are mistaken for prey by many marine animals and seabirds and enter the food chain
- do not go away - they just fragment into smaller and smaller plastic particles



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Nurdles – Eaten by Animals

Seabirds and other marine animals often mistake nurdles for food because they look like fish eggs or small crustaceans. Like other plastic they can get trapped in the animal's stomach causing ulceration, making them feel full and stopping them eating real food.

Post mortems of gulls, terns, fulmars, puffins and other animals living in our seas have been found with nurdles in their stomachs. In the North Sea 95% of fulmars studied contained plastic - astonishingly 273 nurdles were recovered from one bird's stomach.



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To find out more visit our website www.nurdlehunt.org.uk



Fidra is an environmental charity based in East Lothian. It seeks to address a wide range of specific environmental issues by promoting genuinely sustainable practices.

Working with





Help end nurdle pollution right now!

There is currently no practical way of removing nurdles from the sea but we can stop the problem from getting worse.

New nurdles are washing up on our shores but we don't have detailed evidence of where they are coming from or how widespread the problem is.

By looking for nurdles on your local beach and then sharing what you have found on our website, you can have fun and help show the local plastics industry their impact on our seas.

If you think the plastic industry should do their bit to keep our seas clean and plastic free, join the

Great Nurdle Hunt!

Tips to help you hunt

It is a tricky business hunting for nurdles. Coastal geography, tides, currents, and wind mean floating plastic nurdles get washed up on different beaches at different times. Being small and lightweight they are blown around and once on land eventually get caught in sheltered nooks and crannies.

WHERE TO LOOK

Amongst other plastic:

The best place to start your hunt is amongst accumulations of small pieces of plastic above the tide line.

Paths:

Look on sheltered tracks and paths at the edge of the beach.

Vegetation:

Blown on shore from the sea they get caught in the base of the grasses at the top of the beach.

Strand line:

The sea washes them up to the high tide mark where they get trapped in the strand line debris.

Sandy Beach:

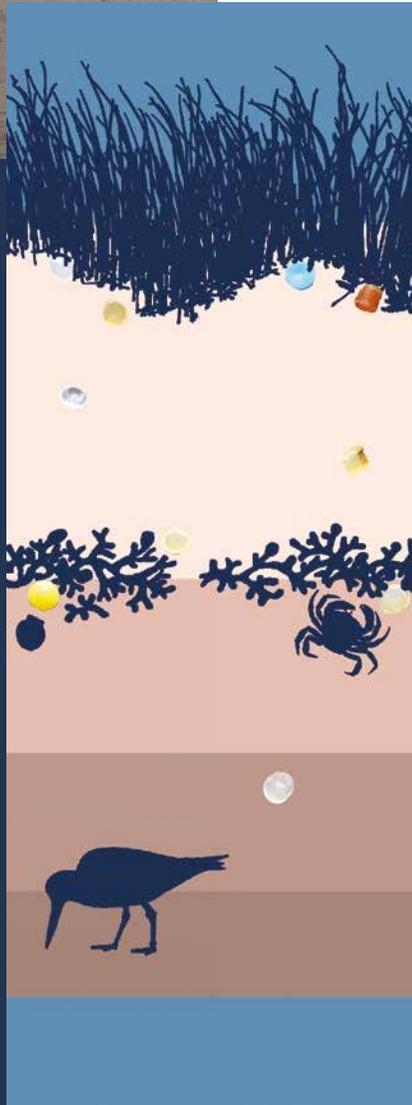
It is easier to hunt on sandy rather than stony or pebbly beaches

Headlands:

Beach litter often accumulates near the headlands of bays.

Un-cleaned beaches:

In the summer some popular beaches are mechanically cleaned. Avoid these areas.



KNOW YOUR NURDLES

Nurdles are hard to spot! They are very small and their colour often blends in with the sand, so on your hunt slow down and get close to the ground.



Colour:

Most are clear or white but they become yellow over time. You do get coloured pellets too.

Size and Shape:

Between 3-5mm in diameter, often shaped like a lentil.

COLLECTING NURDLES

An old jam jar is ideal for collecting nurdles and showing them off to your friends.

Please remember that nurdles absorb toxic pollutants from the ocean. We recommend you wear gloves or use tweezers when collecting them and always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water afterwards.

SHARE YOUR FINDINGS ONLINE AT...

www.nurdlehunt.org.uk

It's really simple to report your sightings. We want to know where you were nurdle hunting, how many you found and how long you were hunting for. Pictures of your finds are also really helpful and you can upload them online too.

