



SOLID WASTE & MARINE LITTER, did you know...

That solid waste is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material that is discarded or left abandoned. Such material that is not disposed of properly has the potential to negatively impact the Caribbean Sea.

That less than 35% of solid waste goes to regulated sanitary landfills lacking maintenance and nearly two-thirds or 275,000 tonnes daily ends up in open-air dumps or in rivers in the Wider Caribbean Region.¹

That everyday 8,000,000 new solid waste items become marine litter in our oceans and seas. The solid waste collection coverage in major Caribbean cities varies from 60% to over 90% of the population.³

That 424,000 tonnes of solid waste are generated daily in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹

That marine litter can be classified into land or ocean waterway-based, depending on how the debris enters the water.⁴

That about 70% of the litter that enters our seas and oceans ends up on the seafloor, with half of the remaining amount being found on beaches and half floating on the water's surface.²

That studies have shown that a high proportion (approximately 50% to 80%) of sea turtles found dead are known to have ingested some form of marine litter.⁵

Without concerted global action, there could be one tonne of plastic for every 3 tonnes of fish by 2025, leading to massive environmental, economic and health issues.⁶

That it takes 1,000,000 years for a glass bottle, 600 years for fishing line, 450 years for a plastic bottle, 450 years for a disposable diaper, 80-200 years for an aluminium can, 80 years for foamed plastic, 30-40 years for nylon fabric, 1-5 years for a cigarette filter, 3 months for a waxed milk carton, 2-5 weeks for an orange or banana peel and 2-4 weeks for paper towels to decompose.⁷

That pollution from land-based sources is a primary cause of coral reef degradation throughout the world. The estimated value of shoreline protection services provided by Caribbean reefs is between US\$700 million and US\$2.2 billions per year. Within the next 50 years, coral degradation and death could lead to losses totaling US\$140 millions to US\$420 millions annually.⁸

¹ Pan-American Centre for Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences, Solid Waste management in Latin America and the Caribbean: Scenarios and Outlook, accessed from 2008-05-05 from http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-97966-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

² United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, accessed from 2008-04-02 from http://www.unep.or.jp/ietc/ESTdir/Pub/MSW/RO/contents_Latin_A.asp

³ UNEP 2005, Marine Litter: An Analytical Overview, Nairobi, Kenya

⁴ UNEP 2008, Marine Litter in the Wider Caribbean Region: A Regional Overview and Action plan, United Nations Environment Programme, Kingston, Jamaica.

⁵ Greenpeace, 2006, Plastic Debris in the Worlds Oceans, accessed from 2008-03-20 from http://oceans.greenpeace.org/en/documents-reports/plastic_ocean_report

⁶ Ocean Conservancy, 2015, Stemming the Tide: Land Based Strategies for a Plastic Free Ocean. Accessed from 2016-08-11. <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris/mckinsey-report-files/full-report-stemming-the.pdf>

⁷ Ocean Conservancy 2006, A pocket guide to Marine Debris, accessed From 2008-04-29. <http://sacoast.uwc.ac.za/education/resources/marinedebris/index.htm>

⁸ Burtke, Laurette; Maidens, Jonathan, 2004. Reefs at Risk in the Caribbean. World Resources Institute. Washington, DC.