

# HOW DOES MARINE LITTER AFFECT WILDLIFE & ECOSYSTEMS?

## Alien species invasion

Some species hitch a ride on litter items and invade seas they would normally never reach. When these establish themselves in a new environment they interact with native species and pose threats to the biota and ecosystems. Alien species invasion is one of the most important threats to global biodiversity.

## Damage of the benthic habitats

Litter in the sea can damage benthic habitats in many ways, through e.g. abrasion of coral reefs from fishing gear; disruption of colonies; disrupted oxygenation or 'smothering' of communities; etc.

## Damage of the coastal habitats

The heavy machinery used to remove litter items from beaches damage the shore habitats.