

From Egg to Amsterdam, intrepid nurdle hunters have been on the beaches over the winter adding to our sightings map. We now have 90 sightings from around the Forth and we are now getting finds from right around the UK and even Europe. The Great Nurdle Hunt has been so successful in the Forth we are extending the hunt to find out if other areas of Scotland's beautiful coastline are being affected. So please do continue to look for nurdles in the Forth but which ever beach you wash up on please have a look for nurdles and share your findings on our website.

FINDINGS

Isle of May Puffins have been found with nurdles in their stomach.

After examination by the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology there is now no doubt that Puffins in the Forth are mistaking nurdles for food. The Isle of May, a Special Area of Conservation and National Nature Reserve attracts around 250,000 seabirds each year making it one of Scotland's largest breeding seabird colonies. It also has the largest breeding population of puffins in the North Sea. This discovery is a disturbing and serious reminder of the effects this pollution has on our wildlife and the pressing need for industry to act to prevent further losses into our estuary.



INDUSTRY

At nurdle HQ we have been putting your sightings to good use. Locally, we continue to contact the plastics industry directly to show them the impact of pellet pollution on our estuary. As a result we are now working with a number of companies who are keen to help keep nurdles out of the Forth by adopting the Operation Clean Sweep (OCS) programme.

We have also been speaking directly to the trade associations, the British Plastics Federation and PlasticsEurope who are now stepping up their efforts to promote OCS to their members not just in the Forth but also in the UK and Europe.

Globally, we have been contacted by several multinational brands, and are engaging with these companies to encourage them to ensure their supply chains adopt and adhere to OCS Guidelines.

SCIENCE

Recent scientific studies have increased fears about the scale and severity of plastic pollution in the world's oceans. It is now estimated that 8,800,000 tons of plastic are dumped into our oceans annually.

All this plastic is seriously affecting marine animals. The most comprehensive impact study in more than a decade found evidence of 44,000 animals and organisms becoming entangled in, or swallowing man-made debris. A new technique has also revealed microplastics in digestive tract whales for the first time. This may lead to detection of microplastics in many of our other large marine mammals.

J.R Jambeck et al., Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean, Science, 13 Feb 2015 / S.C.Gall, R.C.Thompson, The impact of debris on marine life, Marine Pollution Bulletin, 10 Feb 2015 / A.L.Lusher et al., Microplastic and macroplastic ingestion by a deep diving, oceanic cetacean: The True's beaked whale Mesoplodon mirus Environmental Pollution, April 2015



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