

## Trash to Treasure: Protecting Our Waterways

Humpback whales are found in waters throughout the world and follow finite migration paths from their summer feeding grounds to warmer waters in the winter. North Pacific Humpback whales are among the most endangered whales with fewer than 10 percent of their original population remaining. The main threats they face in the ocean are ship strikes and entanglement in ocean trash and fishing gear.



### How do we help?

When marine mammals get entangled in fishing gear, The Marine Mammal Center is there to help. We can do “house calls” on the water for animals that are too big to rescue... like whales! Whales often get caught in fishing gear with long ropes. If they don’t see these ropes in the water, they can get tangled as they swim by.



The debris can drag for miles exhausting the whale and damaging their tail flukes or bodies. When this happens, The Marine Mammal Center and our whale response partners have a special team--and a special little boat--we use to try to disentangle these animals.



The Marine Mammal Center is a founding member of the [Trash Free Seas Alliance](#)<sup>®</sup>, a coalition of nonprofits and industry leaders focused on innovative and pragmatic solutions to rid the ocean of plastic pollution and other forms of marine debris.

As a way to showcase ocean trash, we hosted a [Washed Ashore](#) exhibit featuring beautifully designed, giant sea life sculptures made entirely of marine debris collected from beaches. These sculptures help illustrate the tragedy of plastic pollution which makes up most of the ocean trash, so by switching to more reusable and sustainable alternatives, we can stop the pollution at the source.

## How can we help?

### Activity

Just like the Washed Ashore exhibit, we want to reuse potential ocean trash. In this activity we want to find ways make treasure from trash and keep it from entering our waterways.

We all have a part to play in shielding and safeguarding the ocean habitat.

#### Materials:

- ✓ Bucket or reusable bag for holding collected trash
- ✓ Gloves



### Instructions

1. Plan a good time to collect trash. You can organize a group to go a certain day, or you can just pick up trash while walking in your neighborhood.
2. Grab a reusable bag or bucket and a pair of gloves
3. Collect as much trash as you can/want
4. Separate the “clean,” dry trash from everything else. This is what you want to use for your masterpiece.
5. Create any marine animal you want out of the trash you collected! Your artwork could be a whale made of scraps of paper or it can be a sculpture made from all sorts of items like the Washed Ashore exhibit.
6. Share your masterpiece with the world and show people how they can turn trash into treasure! Post a picture of your creation and tag us @themarinemammalcenter

**Become an Ocean Hero:** You can take action in your daily life and community to reduce your plastic footprint. Every time we reduce plastic, we are protecting ourselves and the environment upon which we all depend.

Learn more here. <https://www.marinemammalcenter.org/science-conservation/conservation/ocean-trash>

