



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE FACT SHEET

Updated July 10, 2012

Reporting: beach.debris@state.or.us
or call 211 or 1-800-SAFENET

Marine Invasive Species and Japan Tsunami Marine Debris

The tsunami that hit Japan in March 2011 gave rise to one of the largest known pulses of marine debris in history, some of which is now reaching our shores. A subset of the debris may carry marine plants and animals that are native to northern Japan and have the potential to become harmful marine invasive species in Oregon. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is the state's resource management expert on issues related to marine debris and organisms living on it¹—including debris that may carry invasive species. The agency provides recommendations and best practices for:

- Identification of risks associated with marine invasive species
- Handling living organisms that are attached to marine debris
- Technical assistance related to the removal of invasive organisms that arrive on marine debris

What to do if you find marine debris

Follow these best-practice guidelines for handling marine debris – especially debris that has living organisms on it.

- **If you find marine debris that has living organisms attached:** Take a photo, if possible, and send the photo along with details (location, date found, description of item, what you did with the item) to beach.debris@state.or.us. This information will be shared with the marine debris response team and invasive species experts to determine what action needs to be taken.
- **If you are able to move the item, please do your part.** Dispose of it as follows:
 - If you find **small** marine debris items—with or without living organisms – dispose of them in a garbage can off the beach or a landfill. If you are too far from a disposal site, remove the item from the water and place on dry land (above the high tide line) so that any organisms living on it will die and not be returned to the ocean.
 - If you find debris that is **too large** to remove: Report it and its location to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department via email, beach.debris@state.or.us or call 211 or 1-800-SAFENET.
 - **Never move** debris with organisms on it to other bodies of water—an aquarium, pond or estuary. It increases the risk that invasive species will spread.

Facts about invasive species and marine debris management

A lot of marine debris that washes ashore is not from the tsunami: Marine debris arrives on our shore every day from around the Pacific, including from sources within Oregon. Accumulation of marine debris

is an ongoing concern no matter *where* it comes from, however, the Japan tsunami created a large marine debris field that will likely come onshore in dense pulses.

Not all marine debris carries invasive species, nor does it pose a risk: Much of the marine debris that comes onshore has living organisms on it; many of these organisms are native pelagic species and do not pose a threat to the environment. The items related to the Japan Tsunami debris field that are most likely to carry invasive species are those that were floating in Japan's waters for some time before the tsunami—docks, buoys and boats, for example.

Several agencies aid in the management of Japan Tsunami Marine Debris on our beaches:

- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department responds to debris on beaches
- Oregon Office of Emergency Management coordinates the multi-agency response to tsunami debris
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is the lead federal agency coordinating the regional response to JTMD
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is the technical lead on invasive species risk and management, coordinating with state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and other stakeholders and professionals concerning invasive species issues.

ODFW Invasive Species Contacts

Rick Boatner, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Rick.J.Boatner@state.or.us , (503) 947-6308

Meg Kenagy, Conservation Communications Coordinator, Meg.B.Kenagy@state.or.us, (503) 947-6021

More information

Marine invasive species pose a serious threat to Oregon's marine environment and native species by competing with our native fish and wildlife for food and habitat. While not all nonnative species are destructive, most often, they exist at the expense of native fish and wildlife and can impact the state's economy. Visit ODFW's [Marine Invasive Species Web](#) page in the Conservation section of the website under Invasive Species.

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1. Per ORS 496.012 and related statutes.