Fisheries and aquaculture practices contributing to marine litter and plastic pollution

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AQUACULTURE DEBRIS

The largest component of aquaculture-related marine litter wear and tear on aquaculture installations.

The material lost depends on culture systems, construction quality, vulnerability to damage, and management practices.

The majority of marine litter from aquaculture activities originates from **equipment damage caused by**:

- regular wear and tear
- catastrophic weather events
- accidents and conflicts
- inadequate waste management
- poor maintenance and improper installation.

Waste management

Lack of incentives to recycle or reuse gear
Inadequate reception and storage facilities for waste and consignment
Lack of operators to handle waste or gear

Comparision of volumes

Single-use plastic products

15 604 tons

Fishery and aquaculture -related litter

11 000 tons

Comparison of the contribution of fishing gear and aquaculture to waste and marine litter (netting and non-netting) in European waters with that of single-use plastic products

14%

Beach surveys in aquaculture areas show significant amounts of plastics in the form of nets and cage structures, lines and floating raft structures, and poles, bags, lines and plastic sheeting.

15%

In **sea floor surveys** litter from aquaculture accounted for 15 per cent of found items.

United Nations Environment Programme (2021). From Pollution to Solution: A global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution. Nairobi.

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