

What are Nurdles?

Nurdles are small plastic pellets about the size of a lentil which are melted together to make nearly all our plastic products.



How do they end up at sea?

- Accidental spills can happen wherever nurdles are made, handled or transported
- Nurdles are small, light and most float in water, if they are spilt and not cleaned up they can be easily blown, washed or brushed into drains
- Once nurdles reach storm drains they are carried straight out to sea

Nurdles are estimated to be the second largest source of primary microplastic pollution globally.

In the sea, currents and wind spread them widely and can be found washing up on beaches across the world; from Scotland to South Africa.

Why are nurdles harmful?

Like other plastics in our sea, nurdles ...

- can be mistaken for food by marine wildlife, particularly seabirds
- attract and concentrate chemical contaminants known as Persistent Bioaccumulating Toxins (PBTs) to highly toxic levels
- do not go away - they just fragment into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic



Nurdles have been found in the stomachs of fulmars

Nurdles – Eaten by Animals

Seabirds and other marine wildlife can easily mistake nurdles for food because they look like fish eggs or small crustaceans. Like other plastic they can get trapped in the animal's stomach causing ulceration, making them feel full and stopping them eating real food.

Post-mortems of gulls, terns, fulmars, puffins and other animals, including turtles, squid and fish in our seas have been found with nurdles in their stomachs. In the North Sea 95% of fulmars studied contained plastic.

For more information and resources to help you take part please visit www.nurdlehunt.org.uk



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Fidra is an environmental charity working to reduce plastic waste and chemical pollution in our seas, on our beaches and in the wider environment.

Working with



For more information on our supporters globally visit www.nurdlehunt.org.uk



Your guide to nurdle hunting...



Take part and help end nurdle pollution in our seas

The Great Nurdle Hunt is run by Fidra to end plastic pellet pollution and you can take part!

Taking part is easy, fun and adds to a worldwide map of nurdle pollution.

All you need to do is:

- Head to a beach
- Look for nurdles
- Let us know how you get on

What we need to know:

- How many nurdles you saw
- Where you saw them
- How long you were hunting
- How many people were hunting

What do I need?

You don't need anything other than yourself but you can download a handy ID sheet at www.nurdlehunt.org.uk to help you hunt.

Why is this helpful?

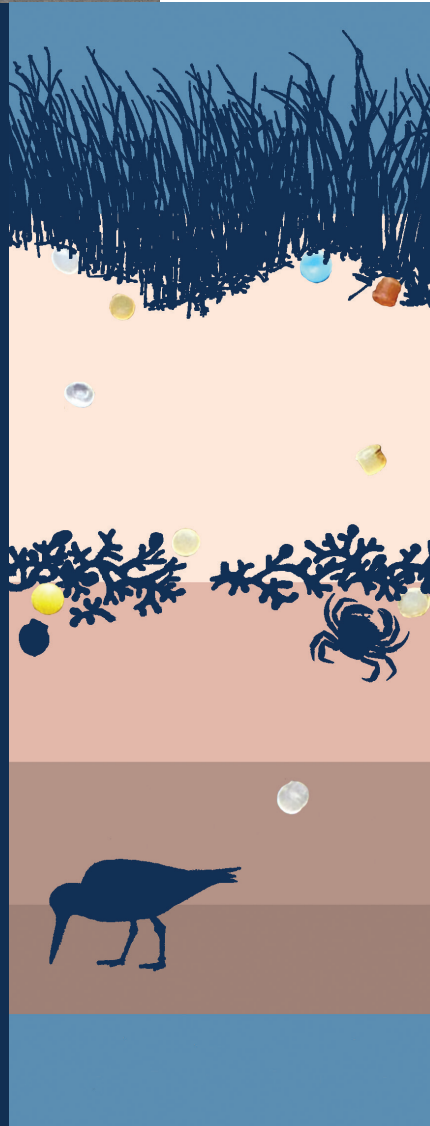
Once in the sea, nurdles are almost impossible to remove, so we need to stop this pollution at source. By taking part in a nurdle hunt you are contributing to a worldwide data set which helps us show industry and governments the global scale of the problem and that people just like you care about nurdle pollution.

When you submit your Nurdle Hunt finds they will be added to our global map. Show industry you care about his issue and join in today.

Tips to help you hunt

Coastal geography, tides, currents, and wind mean floating plastic nurdles get washed up on beaches all over the world. Often they can be found in the tideline with other beached debris.

Being small and lightweight, nurdles are blown around and once on land can be found at the back of the beach too.



WHERE TO LOOK

Amongst other beach debris:

The best place to start your hunt is amongst other small pieces of plastic. Sometimes nurdles might be mixed in with seaweed and bits of wood.

Paths: Look on sheltered tracks and paths at the edge of the beach.

Vegetation: Blown on shore from the sea nurdles get caught in the base of the grasses at the top of the beach.

Tideline: The sea washes nurdles up to the high tide mark where they get trapped in debris.

Sandy Beach: It is easier to hunt on sandy rather than stony or pebbly beaches

Headlands: Beach litter often builds up near the headlands of bays.

KNOW YOUR NURDLES

Nurdles can be hard to spot! They are very small and their colour often blends in with the sand, so on your hunt slow down and get close to the ground.



Colour: Most are clear or white but they become yellow over time. You can also get coloured, black or grey pellets too.

Size and Shape: Between 3-5mm in diameter, often shaped like a lentil.

Biobeads

Watch out for biobeads - these look similar to nurdles but are used in wastewater treatment. They are often grey or black, but you can get coloured ones too. The main difference to look out for is the wrinkly sides, which nurdles don't have.



You don't need to count these for our survey!

We don't ask you to collect your nurdles or remove them from the beach. However if you want to collect them, please remember that nurdles can be dirty and adsorb toxic pollutants from the ocean.

We recommend you wear gloves or use tweezers when collecting them and always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling nurdles.

SHARE YOUR FINDINGS ONLINE AT...
www.nurdlehunt.org.uk

It's really simple to report your sightings and only takes a few minutes.

Remember to take photos! Pictures of your finds are really helpful and you can upload them online too.

Share your **#nurdlehunt** with us on



@greatnurdler

