

The Great Global Nurdle Hunt — the search for nurdles spans all 7 continents

More than 1000 people took part in this year's global hunt for nurdles between 13th and 22nd March. Across the world, 'nurdlers' headed to beaches, rivers, and estuaries to hunt for these tiny plastic pellets. Nurdles (or plastic pellets) are the raw material of the plastics industry and are used to make nearly all our plastic products. Easily spilled, and not always cleaned up, they are leaking out of the global plastics supply chain, and our volunteers have found that nurdles are polluting our seas and waterways worldwide. In those 10 days, just **over 200 nurdle hunts were completed across all 7 continents and in 28 countries**. A huge achievement! From the Americas to Australia, and even in Antarctica, nurdle hunters were out in force to uncover this plastic pollution menace.

For many, this event took part in the weeks leading up to or during a lockdown in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. A strange and worrying time for many, it was understandable that a number of events were sensibly cancelled or put on hold.

Regardless of whether you were able to take part this time, if you organised a public event, encouraged others to take part or headed out for a socially distanced **#SoloNurdleHunt**, you were all wonderful! We thank you for taking part and, for doing so safely inline with your national guidance.

This year we saw an increase in nurdle finds, with 87% of hunts finding nurdles. **Nearly 9 out of 10 beaches surveyed were polluted with nurdles.**

These results help to prove that this issue is global, and that we need widespread awareness and collaboration to continue to help prevent this form of pollution at source. **This year we had a total of 65 organisations taking part in the hunt**, many of whom are also working on the ground to stop pellet pollution in their regions. This growing nurdle hunt network allows us to share knowledge and expertise, bringing us all closer to achieving our goal of stopping global pellet pollution for good.

Once again, a huge thank you to everyone who took part. You did a fantastic job and we appreciate the time you took to be part of this global plastic pollution survey.



62nd Fife Crossford Scouts collect nurdles on the shores of the Firth of Forth, Scotland Photo credit: 62nd Fife Crossford Scouts

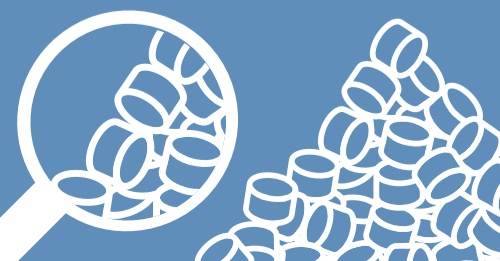


Beach Patrol sorting nurdles on Warrnambool Beach, South Australia Photo credit: Colleen H



Group photo of nurdlers from Watamu Bay, Kenya Photo credit: Eric T, A Rocha Kenya

**THANK YOU FOR
TAKING PART IN THE
#GREATGLOBALNURDLEHUNT**



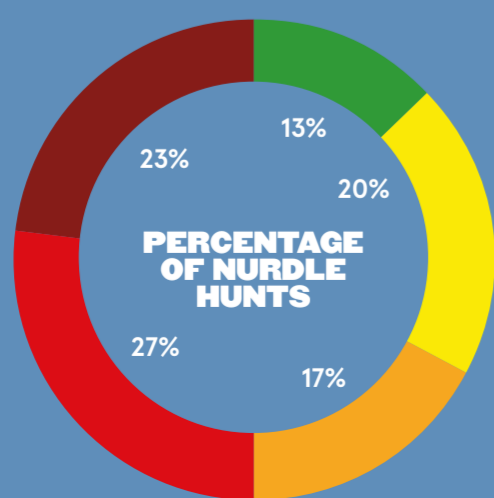
THE GREAT GLOBAL NURDLE HUNT® 2020



COUNTRIES INVOLVED: ANTARCTICA, ALGERIA, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, CHINA (HONG KONG), COCOS ISLANDS, CYPRUS, ECUADOR, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GUERNSEY, GREECE, IRELAND, KENYA, JAPAN, MADAGASCAR, MAURITIUS, MEXICO, NETHERLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, SOUTH AFRICA, SPAIN, THAILAND, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

RESULTS OF A WORLDWIDE PLASTIC POLLUTION SURVEY

HOW MANY NURDLES DID WE FIND?



TOTAL NUMBER OF HUNTS

225

PERCENTAGE WITH NURDLES

87%

COUNTRIES

28

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PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Jace from Nurdle Patrol out supporting the #GreatGlobalNurdleHunt on a beach in the Mission-Aransas Research Reserve, Texas, USA. Photo credit: Jace Tunnell, Nurdle Patrol
2. 1000's of nurdles were found by Lauren on the River Ythan on the East Coast of Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in less than an hour. Photo credit: @SaltwaterlifeUK/The Great Nurdle Hunter
3. Recently spilt nurdles found off the coast of Norfolk, East England. Over time clear nurdles become weathered and turn opaque. There was an estimated 12,000 nurdles on this beach that day. Photo credit: Sarah/The Great Nurdle Hunt
4. Sea Shepherd Australia helped organise over 8 events across Australia. In one event in Melbourne 20 volunteers found 5,438 nurdles. This photo was taken at an event in Adelaide, South Australia. Photo credit: Sea Shepherd Australia
5. In Tai Pak Wan, Lantau Island, Hong Kong also known as Discovery Bay, 25 volunteers collected 11,557 nurdles in 120 minutes at an event organised by Plastic Free Seas. Photo credit: Plastic Free Seas
6. An amazing group effort from A Rocha Kenya, regular nurdle hunters. This time 66 people took part in the Great Global Nurdle Hunt. Photo credit: Eric Thurania/A Rocha Kenya
7. A nurdle hunt taking place all the way down in Antarctica. This remote hunt for nurdles was located on Signy Island. Photo credit: Becky P/The Great Nurdle Hunt
8. 8 volunteers from the Fundacion Contamos Contigo Ecuador took part in La Boca, Ecuador; finding nurdles and even a Monopoly house! Photo credit: Juan Fernando

How far have we come?

Since The Great Nurdle Hunt began in 2012, nearly 3000 individual nurdle hunts have been submitted to our map at www.nurdlehunt.org.uk. The number of people taking part has risen from 21 nurdle hunts in the first year to over 800 people taking part in 2019. The launch of the Great Global Nurdle Hunt event celebrated the survey's success in reaching international scale, increasing the number of countries surveyed to 50 in total this year.

This year's event showed that **nurdles were found in 80% of countries where hunts took place**. Overall, nurdles have been found on South Atlantic Ocean islands, like Henderson Island all the way to the Arctic Circle, north of Svalbard in Norway. From coastlines near heavy industrial ports to remote isolated beaches, nurdles are a worldwide pollution problem.

In fact, every year it is estimated that around **230,000 tonnes of raw plastic material in the form of pellets enters our environment**¹ from across the world. In the EU alone, that number is estimated to be around 167,000 tonnes annually. This makes it the second largest form of microplastic pollution after dust and particles from vehicle tyres.

Mapping the presence of nurdles has allowed us to create a clearer picture of this little known but pervasive problem. By taking part in The Great Nurdle Hunt we can illustrate to national and international decision makers that pellet pollution is happening right across the global plastics supply chain. It also shows that people know and care about the problem, vital to support the work we are doing to find solutions at source.



Findings from AUSMAP in Australia. Photo credit: Claire O.

Where do we go from here?

Nurdles can be spilt at all stages of the plastics supply chain; from production to transport, manufacture to recycling. When these pellets are used or handled spills can occur and if not cleaned up can leak into the environment. We believe there needs to be an industry-wide approach to tackling pellet loss. This means all companies should handle their pellets responsibly and a system must be implemented that can hold companies accountable for any spills or leakages that aren't dealt with appropriately.

This needs to be agreed and enforced at both industry and government decision making levels. That's why we are currently participating in the Scottish Government's Pellet Loss Steering Group; a voluntary group of industry, governmental and NGO representatives trying to address this issue and trial a supply chain approach to tackling pellet loss. We are also working with other NGOs across Europe to ensure the European Commission fulfils its commitment to tackle plastic pellet loss across the plastics supply chain.

It's important, now more than ever, that we keep up the pressure by continuing to shine a spotlight on this ongoing pollution issue. This is where your contribution to events like 'The Great Global Nurdle' is critical.

**50% OF
NURDLE
HUNTS
FOUND
OVER 100
NURDLES**

What you can do next

Keep taking part in The Great Nurdle Hunt – Search, Submit and Share!




- **The Great Nurdle Hunt runs all year round.** So, whatever the season, you can still take part and search for nurdles. By adding data to our online map you can continue to build our worldwide picture of nurdle pollution. Take part anytime, anywhere. **Submit your data at:** NurdleHunt.org.uk

Find out more about our work on solutions

- Head to NurdleHunt.org.uk/the-solution to read our briefing about Supply Chain Solutions to pellet loss and find out more about how you can be part of the solution.

Share your nurdle story with others!




- **Let others know about this issue on social media.** Tell them why taking part in this citizen science project is important, where you go nurdle hunting and what you find. By showing people you care, national and international decision makers will start to notice that this issue needs addressing all around the globe.

 [@NurdleHunt](https://www.facebook.com/NurdleHunt)
 [@greatnurdler](https://twitter.com/greatnurdler)
 [@greatnurdler](https://www.instagram.com/greatnurdler)



East Grampian Coastal Partnership in Scotland collecting nurdles. Photo credit: Crawford P.



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
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Fidra is a Scottish registered charity and SCIO no.SC043895



1. Ref: 'Eunomia (2018) Investigating Options for Reducing Releases in the Aquatic Environment of Microplastics Emitted by (But Not Intentionally Added In) Products. Accessed at: www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/investigating-options-for-reducing-releases-in-the-aquatic-environment-of-microplastics-emitted-by-products/