



Nurdle Hunt at Limekilns, Fife, Scotland.  
Photo credit: Joanne M.



# The Great Global Nurdle Hunt 2021

**A massive thank you to the 925 people who took part in the 2021 Great Global Nurdle Hunt.**

Throughout October, individuals, schools, communities, and organisations from 23 countries headed outdoors to hunt for these polluting plastic pellets. This year's hunt has been bigger and better than ever, and the photos and videos shared have been particularly important to highlight the shocking levels of pollution spotted in all corners of the world. Check out key facts from this year's hunt on the next page of this report.

Thank you again to everyone who took part or helped spread the word, whether you found 0 or 1000s of nurdles, your efforts are truly appreciated. Your data is being presented to world leaders at COP26, providing evidence of global pellet pollution and that thousands of people want to see further action.



Volunteers from Parley for the Oceans, Sri Lanka. Photo credit: Irushinie W.

## WHAT ARE NURDLES?

Nurdles are small round pellets produced by the plastics industry and are melted down to make nearly all our plastic products, from car parts to medical supplies. These small pellets are adding up to a big pollution problem, nurdles are often mishandled by industry and leak out across the global plastics supply chain in very high numbers, and our volunteers have demonstrated year on year that nurdles are polluting coastlines worldwide.



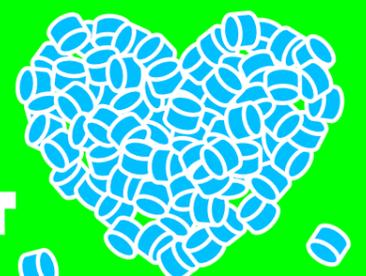
From a Nurdle Hunt by The Orca Foundation, South Africa.  
Photo credit: Melissa N.

**"MANMADE DISASTERS LIKE IMPROPER STORAGE AND TRANSFER OF NURDLES ARE DAMAGING. I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN PART OF THE SOLUTION AND MAKE MALDIVES BEACHES NURDLE FREE".**

**SHAZIYA SAEED,  
SAVE OUR WAVES, MALDIVES**



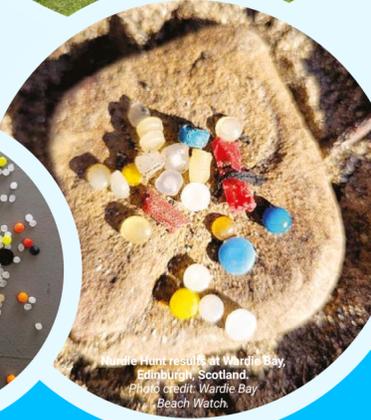
Nurdle Hunt by Parley for the Oceans, Honolulu.  
Photo credit: Parley for the Oceans.



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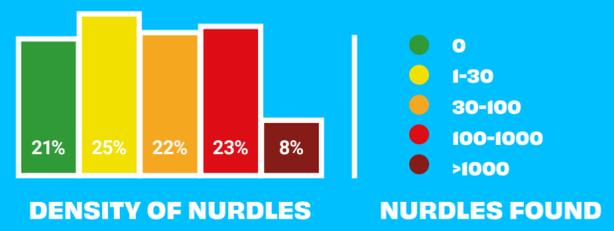


21 OUT OF 23 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES FOUND NURDLES.

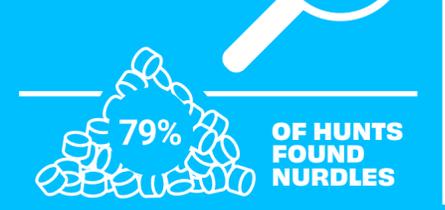


## RESULTS OF A WORLDWIDE PLASTIC POLLUTION SURVEY

### TOTAL NUMBER OF NURDLES FOUND



### TOTAL NUMBER OF HUNTS



### 23

NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

### DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2020, polymer and additive manufacturers released at least 14 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e gases, this is the equivalent to emissions from 7 coal-fired power plants. (Beyond Plastics, 2021)
- Plastic on beaches can release CO<sub>2</sub>, ethylene, methane and propane, that all contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. (Royer et al, 2018)
- If plastic production growth continues, plastic will account for 20% of global oil consumption by 2050. (Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet, 2019)



### PHOTO CAPTIONS

- On the north side of the San Elijo Lagoon outlet, L.A., U.S.A. Nurdles were found near the edge of the lagoon mouth in sea grass and seaweed. Up to 30 were found in 30 mins. Photo credit: Megan P.
- Nurdles were at the top of the beach along the edge of the dunes in Gullane, Scotland. Over 1000 found in 60 mins. Photo credit: Claire Cavers
- In a small, sandy bay with a strong tidal current on Breones Beach, Spain, over 1,000 nurdles were found in 120 mins. Photo credit: K. Berger
- In Discovery Bay, Hong Kong, nurdles were found washed in from previous typhoons. Up to 1,000 were found in 60 mins. Photo credit: Plastic Free Seas
- In the Riparian zone of river in Perth, Australia. Trapped in sedges and driftwood, this is a known sink for nurdles. This year, numbers are lower due to higher rainfall, which meant they were washed out to sea. But 1,000 were still found in 120 mins. Photo credit: Ocean Remedy
- In the Maldives, two volunteers found up to 1,000 nurdles within 15 minutes. Photo credit: Shaziya S., Save Our Waves
- In South Africa six volunteers collected more than 1,000 nurdles within an hour. Photo credit: Masha R., Wild Oceans
- Eight volunteers found up to 1,000 nurdles within half an hour. Photo credit: Menos Plastico es Fantastico

# Celebrating the nurdle network and solutions to plastic pellet pollution



Since Fidra started working on nurdles in 2012 we have come a long way in ending plastic pellet pollution for good. Nurdles are now widely recognised as a pollution issue globally and there is acceptance that we need to find a better solution than existing voluntary schemes.

We at Fidra have used data from the Great Global Nurdle Hunt to engage and work with industry, trade associations, NGOs and decision makers to take steps towards a [pellet supply chain free of nurdle pollution](#).

However, we still have a way to go in stopping pellet pollution at source across the full global plastics industry. This requires increased awareness, evidence, and public pressure to ultimately create a culture shift across companies handling pellets and, there might not be a one-size-fits-all solution.

The Great Global Nurdle Hunt has been crucial in allowing us to learn about a range of organisations across the globe who are tackling pellet pollution. Through our growing global nurdle network, we are working with ever more passionate people to achieve the best possible solutions to this pervasive pollution problem.

[Our solutions page](#) showcases these different approaches. This information aims to inspire those looking to start work on pellet solutions. If you have been working on an approach or have any ideas of solutions to nurdle pollution that aren't listed, we would love to hear from you – email: [info@fidra.org.uk](mailto:info@fidra.org.uk)



The results of Nurdle Hunts in South Africa. Photo credit: Masha R., Wild Oceans (L) and Michelle B. (R)

## What happens next?

This year Fidra are presenting the results of the 2021 Great Global Nurdle Hunt at COP26 in Glasgow, allowing us to highlight pellet pollution to international decision makers. Adding your voice to the cause has helped us show that this is a widespread global issue that needs action now. We can't keep using energy and fossil fuels to make plastic that ends up in the environment. Nurdle pollution demonstrates plastic is being wasted before it has even been used to make anything, which is a huge waste of resources. Once in the environment nurdles are almost impossible to remove, reuse, or recycle, and studies have shown that plastic on beaches can release CO2, ethylene, methane and propane gases that all contribute to the greenhouse effect. If we can prevent nurdle and plastic pollution, we can make ecosystems more resilient to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. Read more about our work and the climate emergency: [www.fidra.org.uk/cop26](http://www.fidra.org.uk/cop26)

## What you can do next

### Keep hunting!

You can take part in a nurdle hunt at anytime, anywhere! By adding data to our online map, you continue to build our worldwide picture of nurdle pollution, supporting solutions work internationally. Submit your data at: [NurdleHunt.org.uk](http://NurdleHunt.org.uk)

### Spread the word

Share [our solutions page](#) with contacts, organisations and decision makers. Why not write to your local decision maker to highlight impacts of pellet pollution on your local beach, or even better, take them along on your next hunt!

### Keep in touch

Share your nurdle story with us and with your friends on social media. Tell people why you think taking part in a nurdle hunt is important, where you go nurdle hunting and what you find. [Sign up to our mailing list](#) to keep up to date with all the latest nurdle news.



Sunderland Nurdle Hunt. Photo credit: Douglas M.

## The Great Global Nurdle Hunt 2022

Next year's Great Global Nurdle Hunt is planned to go ahead in October 2022. It's never too early to start prepping! Get it penciled in your diary and start to spread the word, follow us on social media to keep updated.



Fidra

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