Baseline

Composition and abundance of marine debris stranded on the beaches of Sri Lanka: Results from the first island-wide survey

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ABSTRACT

This study provides the first assessment of marine debris washed ashore on 22 beaches along the coast of Sri Lanka. There was an average of 4.1 large (>25 mm) and 158 small (5-25 mm) pieces of debris per square meter of beach. Classified by use, packaging material (55%) dominated the debris, followed by consumer products (25%) and fishing gear (20%). In terms of materials, plastic was the greatest contributor (93%) to marine debris. Beaches near a river mouth or city and those with a barrier had greater debris accumulations. The east coast had significantly greater small debris density, possibly due to strong northeastern monsoon currents. Large spatial heterogeneity was observed in the amount of debris. Long-term monitoring is imperative to better understand the temporal changes in, and the pathways and possible management of, marine debris.