

# Marine Pollution and Health

## Waste materials find their way into European Seas increasing risks to human and ecosystem health

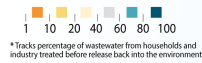
Reductions in oxygen content can lead to changes in the distribution of species and the formation of hypoxic or 'dead' zones, such as in the Baltic Sea. Hypoxia has also been observed in other European seas in recent decades. The primary cause of hypoxic zones is nutrient input from agricultural fertilisers, causing eutrophication.

Across all of Europe's regional seas, marine biodiversity is in poor condition: only seven per cent of marine species assessments indicate favourable conservation status.

### Distribution of locations with observed hypoxia

- Eutrophic
- Hypoxia (not specified)
- Hypoxia (episodic)
- Hypoxia (seasonal)
- Hypoxia (persistent)

### National wastewater treatment indicator\*

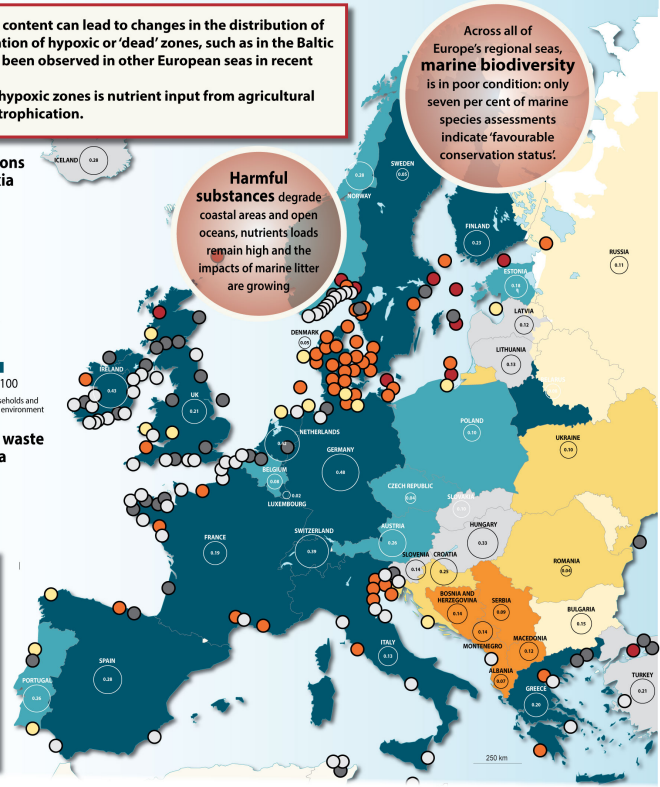


### Average daily plastic waste production per capita

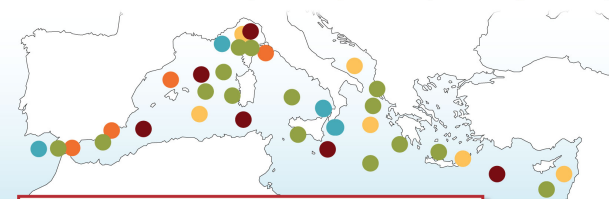
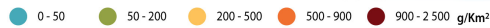


European countries release an estimated amount of 1,173 tonnes of plastic into the sea each day. The Seine, Po and Danube rivers deposit 2-6 tons of microplastics into the sea every day

Harmful substances degrade coastal areas and open oceans, nutrients loads remain high and the impacts of marine litter are growing



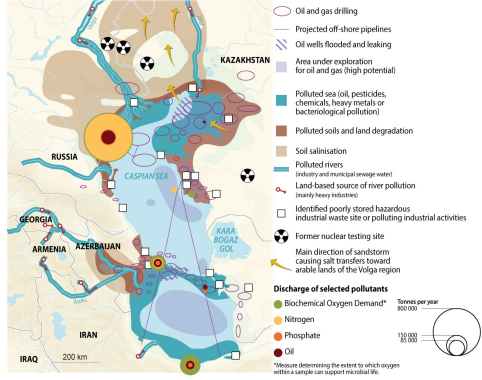
### Plastic concentration



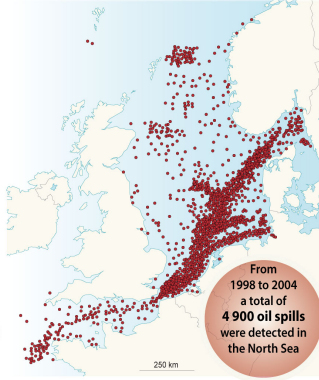
The Mediterranean Sea is one of the areas most affected by marine litter in the world and has the highest density of marine litter on the sea floor. Total weight of sea surface microplastics in the Mediterranean basin is estimated at more than 1,000 tonnes.

In the Caspian Sea, pollution from various extractive activities has been increasing over the past decade. The different pollution types affect both human and ecosystem health.

### Hazards in and around the Caspian Sea



### Oil spills in the North Sea



### What can be done?

- SUPPORT POLICY EFFORTS** aimed at reducing chemical and fertilizer contamination of Europe's seas. Improve nutrients management to reduce nutrient releases into waters.
- REDUCE PLASTIC LITTER** through phasing-out single-use-plastics and non-recoverable plastic materials. Improve plastics management through the implementation of circular economy principles. Support the Global Partnership on Marine Litter.
- ESTABLISH/EXPAND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS:** the establishment and expansion of marine protected areas and their well-connected networks can act as a key conservation measure to safeguard marine biodiversity and ecosystems at regional and global scales.
- SUPPORT TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION ON REGIONAL SEAS** and the integrated assessment and management approaches within the framework of the Regional Sea Conventions such as HELCOM, OSPAR, Barcelona and Bucharest Conventions, and the Tehran Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea. Continue supporting and improving cooperation for enhanced surveillance and control of oil spills.