

Status of marine litter in YSLME: consolidated baseline report supported by UNDP/GEF YSLME
Phase II Project

Abstract

The semi-enclosed nature of the yellow Sea and rapid economic development of the surrounding area have resulted in an increasing polluted and over-exploited Sea. Identifying patterns of marine litter distribution and assessment of baseline for marine litter of the Yellow Sea can benefit an understanding of the scale of their potential effect on the environment and organisms. Since 2007, National Marine Debris Monitoring Programme was carried out by State Oceanic Administration of China. The monitoring contents include surface water litter, beach litter, and seafloor litter. In 2016, Marine Microplastic Pilot Monitoring Programme was launched. Although China was considered a hot spot of plastic debris pollution, comparison of our data (SOA) with those of other published reports shows that the microplastic density in the Yellow Sea is of the same order of magnitude as that in the central-western Mediterranean Sea, Seto inland Sea, East China Sea, and Arctic polar waters. The microplastic density is lower than that in the near shore waters of the Black Sea, the southeastern seashore of South Korea, the East Asian Sea, and the Black Sea waters.

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