

Wanted observations:

Interactions between wild animals and plastic litter in the Arctic and SubArctic – both harmful and non-harmful incidences

Upload observations to: www.inaturalist.org/projects/plastics-wildlife-in-the-arctic-subarctic-and-northern-europe



- o Plastic pollution affects Arctic wildlife on land, along the coast and in the ocean
- o We invite all, both schools, hunters, fishermen, nature enthusiasts, researchers and citizens in general, to contribute with relevant observations to the Citizen Science project: '[Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic and SubArctic](https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/plastics-wildlife-in-the-arctic-subarctic-and-northern-europe)'.
- o We focus on observations on entanglement, ingestion, nest materials, biofouling and other direct contact with plastic litter/debris
- o Any outdoor observation of wildlife interacting directly with plastic litter in the environment is relevant
- o You can also easily explore yourself where and what observations have been reported to the project.

HOW:

It is quite easy to report such observations both when downloading the INaturalist mobile app (download from both GooglePlay and AppStore), but you can also use the web-interface for our project community '[Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic, SubArctic and Northern Europe](https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/plastics-wildlife-in-the-arctic-subarctic-and-northern-europe)' for reporting your observations.

Photos as documentation of observation will of course be the best, but it is not a requirement – and observations do not need to be reported instantly, because they can of course also be reported later to our project at www.INaturalist.org, e.g. if you not have access to internet while being outdoor.

WHERE:

The geographical area of this project covers both pan-Arctic and SubArctic regions in Greenland, Canada and Alaska as well as adjacent parts of Nordic Countries and other North European countries around the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

Incidences of wildlife interacting with plastic debris will of course be more likely in urban areas and even landfills with high loads of garbage, but this can also happen in remote areas, e.g. where plastic litter are washed ashore on coastlines and many other places. All observations will be relevant for the project !

It is easy to pinpoint the specific location for your observation when you use iNaturalist, both by the GPS signal in your device or by zooming into your location from the available map at iNaturalist.

WHAT ANIMALS:

Birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, invertebrates, and other wildlife, i.e. all but our interest is to document their direct interactions with plastics in the environment - both the harmful and non-harmful interactions.

You can choose to report observations for specific species, or just for higher taxonomic levels as family, class or phylum. You can e.g. just submit for "gulls" or "birds" if you are not sure what specific species it is.

WHAT TYPES OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN WILDLIFE AND PLASTIC:

The observations shall include instances of:

- Entanglement in e.g. cords, (ghost) nets, lost fishing lines, packaging materials etc
- Ingestion of plastics (stomach contents) and occurrence in scats and regurgitates,
- Use of plastic as nesting material,
- Biofouling on plastic debris, e.g. if invertebrates are settled and
- Other direct interaction with man-made litter/debris like plastics in the environment.

We are **NOT** interested in observations of animals caught in constructions like fences or active hunting and fishing gear, such as snares, nets and angling and neither bycatches - only if remains of e.g. angling lines or hooks are left behind as litter in the environment and are causing entanglement.

We are neither interested in photos of just plastic items without any direct interactions with wildlife.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION FIELDS needed for YOUR OBSERVATION

When/if you link your observations to our community project "**Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic and SubArctic**" (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/plastics-wildlife-in-the-arctic-subarctic-and-northern-europe>), you will in addition be asked to add four minor descriptive "observation fields" from simple drop down menus with regard to:

- A) dead, or alive?
- B) Type of Interaction with plastic / litter
- C) Plastic/ litter category and
- D) Location, description

- and this is still easy to do.

*So **remember** to link
your Plastics & Wildlife
observations
to this project, thanks !*

WHY:

Compiling this information is essential to better understand the impacts of widespread plastic pollution and may provide valuable insights for Arctic research and Environmental Assessments such as in the ArcSolution One Health project: <https://nordlandsforskning.no/en/news/2024/arcsolution-project-launched-combat-arctic-pollution>.

This activity is also in line with e.g. recommendations from AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme) on providing better knowledge of impacts of plastic pollution in the Arctic and SubArctic.

In addition, a better public insight in how plastic debris and other litter items affect Arctic wildlife will hopefully also increase the public awareness on the unintended impacts of littering.

Exploring use of Citizen Science database www.INaturalist.org to report data on plastics impacts on wildlife in the Arctic and SubArctic and Northern Europe and Canada

We will invite **local hunters, nature enthusiasts, researchers and citizens in general** to contribute with relevant observations on harmful as well as non-harmful interactions with plastic.

We have established a new project community: **Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic and SubArctic**



We welcome
all to add
observations

www.INaturalist.org



from both aquatic and terrestrial environments

Stats

Totals	Most Observed Species
386 Observation	Northern Gannet 3.3 observations
117 Species »	Black-legged Kittiwake 1.7 observations
290 People »	Skua 1.4 observations
	Common Raven 1.3 observations
	European Herring Gull 1.3 observations

We will look into: - Species lists and identifying more vulnerable species
- Geographical coverage
- Identifying common types of harmful litter items

Contact: Jakob Strand, AU: JAK@ECOS.AU.DK



Maybe you have also already some photos of old observations that you add to this project ?

We welcome ALL to add observations

– so please share, thanks !



If you have any questions, you can contact the project curator:

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Email: jak@ecos.au.dk



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Examples of more serious effects caused by plastic debris

Animals entangled in ropes or other plastic



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/42076602>

Polar fox entangled in a trawlnet on the shore



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/168977501>

Birds, entangled in plastic, e.g. in colonies



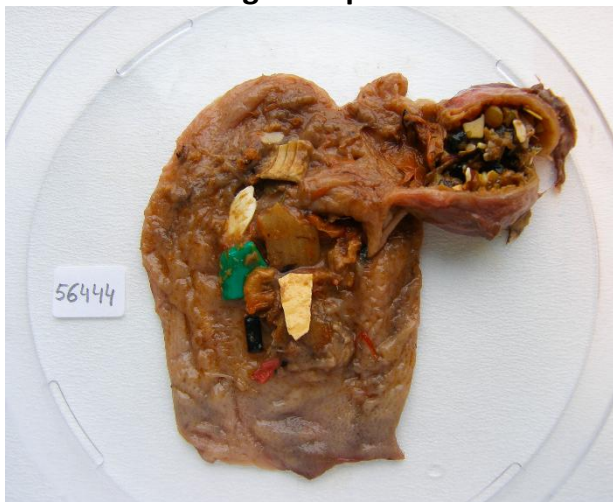
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/263367377>

Animals entangled in e.g. fishing lines and hooks



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/264233928>

Animals with ingested plastic in stomach



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/251540667>

Polar bear with food wrap and other plastic in stomach



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/264093535>

Examples of less serious interactions between wildlife and plastic litter

Birds using plastic debris as nesting material



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/213190443>

Scats and regurgitates with plastic items



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/34954598>

Animals foraging in plastic waste at landfills



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/200316407>

Animals in towns searching in plastic litter



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/142979967>

Animals carrying or biding in plastic debris



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/195944768>

Marine animals settled on plastic litter (biofouling)



<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/247347702>

Project curator: Jakob Strand, Aarhus University, jak@ecos.au.dk, www.facebook.com/share/1KdBmuWoqr/

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Easy to report with both interfaces: **iNaturalist** web-interface and the app

WEB-INTERFACE:

Add an Observation to **Plastics & Wildlife** in...

Where were you? Name of the place you made the observation

Map

Click the map to add a location

Tags: Common reported photos

Fill out project observation fields

Dead, alive? **Dead (fresh corpse)**

Status of animal when observed

Interaction with plastic / litter **Entanglement**

What interactions happen with plastic / litter?

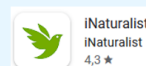
Plastic / litter category **Strings and ropes**

What type of plastic / litter category involved?

Location, description **At sea**

Where? What type of area?

The APP for android and apple:



Redigér observation

Upload photo

Hvad så du? Se forslag

Betegn, hvad du så, hvis du kan, selvom det blot er "insekt" eller "fugl", eller lad blot dette være tomt. Andre kan hjælpe dig med at identificere det!

FORSTÅET!

Notater

27. apr. 2025 06:11 CEST

Placering

Placeringssynlighed: Åben

Er i fangeskab eller dyrket

Føj til projekt(er)

- ← Upload photo
- ← AI suggestion to species ID
- ← or Your species ID
- ← Your notes on observation
- ← Date for observation
- ← Location from map
- ← Location from GPS
- ← Add to our project



Easy to report observations with **the iNaturalist** app

1) Identify the species - by yourself or AI

←

Artssøgning

Vi er ret sikre på, at den er i denne slægt:

True Swans
Slægt Cygnus

Topforslag

Knopsvane
Cygnus olor
Visuelt sammenfald

Dværsgnægås
Anser rossii
Visuelt sammenfald

Grågåas
Anser anser
Visuelt sammenfald

Trompetersvane
Cygnus buccinator

2) Add the location

← Grønland 67.71 - 53.00 Nøj. 800167 Geofortrolighed: Åben

Søg

Grønland

Nordlige Atlanterhav

Add observation to our project + additional information

← Vælg fra forbundne proje... ✓

Søg i projekter du deltager i...

Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic, SubArctic and Northe...

Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic, SubArctic and Northe...

Dead, alive? Status of animal when observed **Alive**

Interaction with plastic / litter **Plastic used as nesting material**

Plastic / litter category **Thin plastic sheetings and bags**

Location, description **Urban (e.g. in towns and other residential are**

← and the required information, drop down menus →

Plastics & Wildlife in the Arctic, SubArctic and Northe...

Dead, alive? Status of animal when observed **Alive**

Interaction with plastic / litter **Entanglement**

Carrying/lifting/biting items

Plastic ingestion (in scat, regurgitates or sto.

Foraging between plastic waste

Plastic used as nesting material

Biofouling (attached to item)

Caught in active fishing or hunting gear

Other

At sea

On the coast/ beach

Freshwater (e.g. lake or river)

Coastal colony

Rural (e.g. farmland, forest or mountain)

Urban (e.g. in towns and other residential are.

Landfills and waste bins

Other

What type of plastic/litter category involved?

Thin plastic sheetings and bags

Location, description

Where? What type of area?

Urban (e.g. in towns and other residential are

NB. Species IDs need to be validated by other iNat users before becoming "Research grade" !

