[Collecting litter and data to combat plastic pollution](#)

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Starting this week, more than 57,000 Danish children make an [effort to clean up the country's nature from plastic pollution and gather data](#) for research and the EEA's Marine Litter Watch database. The nationwide initiative is part of an annual science week, organised by [Astra](#), a national centre for science learning, and [MarinePlastic](#), centre for research in marine plastic pollution.

Plastic pollution damages the environment, valuable materials are lost, and cleaning up is very difficult. There is also a growing concern over micro- and nanoplastics' impact on animals and humans. "Beating plastic pollution has become one of the top priorities in Europe and globally and, by collecting both litter and data, these children make a real effort to tackle the problem. It is truly inspirational to see children shape their future in this way and a reminder for us all about the urgency of action. In Europe, we need to lead the way towards a circular, low-carbon economy and part of that effort is cutting down on single-use plastics.", said Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director.

The EEA [Marine Litter Watch](#) initiative aims to combat plastic pollution by using research conducted, at least partly, by members of the public and mobile-phone technology. Volunteers use the Marine Litter Watch app to form communities that collect litter from beaches and send data on the items to the EEA. Last year, the EEA published an [analysis on the data registered until 2017](#), which identified disposable plastic as by far the biggest contributor to marine litter.

The Danish initiative coincides with the [#EUBeachCleanUp campaign](#), which also uses EEA's Marine Litter Watch platform. Organised by the European Union, the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (UNRIC), the global network of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) and the Smurfs, the campaign aims to inspire all EU delegations, UNICs and partners around the world to organise an activity around the World Clean-up Day, on Saturday 21 September 2019.

The Marine Litter Watch app is available for Android and iOS devices. The app can be downloaded, free of charge, from [Google Play](#) and the [App Store](#).