

**ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MARINE TURTLES IMPACTED
BY OCEAN DEBRIS: A 1989 PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

Authenticated reports of debris entanglement and ingestion by marine turtles have continued to accumulate since a comprehensive, worldwide list of such events was first assembled in 1984. Although fragmentary, available evidence indicates that ingestion of man-made debris floating on the high seas has the greatest potential for adversely impacting sea turtle populations. A major problem in gathering detailed information on this phenomenon is the inability of researchers to locate and study pelagic habitats used by juvenile turtles of all species. Consequently, those cases of debris ingestion that do become known should be considered as the tip of the iceberg. Due to the insights of the late Archie Carr, pelagic habitats used as foraging sites by sea turtles are not believed to be frontal systems (convergences, rips, drift lines) where buoyant food and debris are drawn together by advection. International concern for the impact of buoyant wastes in the ocean is heightened by the fact that many sea turtle populations are endangered and have experienced serious declines from overfishing and other adverse factors.