



CSIRO Marine Debris Newsletter

A look back at the Global Plastics project activities for 2019, and acknowledging a challenging start to 2020.

Dear partners, our hearts and thoughts are with you all during this most challenging of times. We hope that you and your loved ones are remaining safe and secure in light of Covid-19. This pandemic is affecting us all in many, many ways and we acknowledge the difficulties it brings.

In a change from the many news articles focusing on the pandemic, we thought we would bring you a look back at the activities we carried out together in 2019, share some news of travels from the world BC (Before Covid), and let you know we are thinking of you all. In advance, thank you for taking the time to read this – and please share with your networks.

If you have any news or photos you would like to share, we welcome your contributions. Please email MarineDebrisAdmin@csiro.au.

As you are all aware, we reluctantly postponed the conference planned in March (and then hoped to move to June). We don't yet know when we will be able to get together to share our stories of success, to learn from one another and celebrate the great work you're all doing, but we are confident it will happen.

We are also discussing remote (zoom or similar) web-based training in the coming months. Stay tuned!

Team news – Conferences and Workshops

International Sea Turtle Symposium

Qamar attended the symposium in Charleston, South Carolina, USA in February 2019. At this meetings, she presented CSIRO research on how much plastic it takes to kill a turtle.



Photo: Qamar (second from the left, back row) with a group of old and new friends at the Sea Turtle Symposium in South Carolina, USA.

Marine Plastic Pollution Evidence Review

2019 kicked off with a bit of overseas travel for Denise, as she was invited to participate in a government-hosted workshop in London in March. The week's events started with an invitation to a special event with David Attenborough at the House of Commons, where Sir David spoke about the growth of plastic in society and society's need to manage this waste. This was followed by a multi-day workshop with scientists and government staff aimed at reviewing current plastic research and helping to set the direction of work to come in Great Britain, which was supported by DEFRA (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and hosted by IceBlue. Meanwhile, the streets of London were filled with protestors calling for Climate Action (not to mention the separation of the UK from the European Union).





Photos: Climate rallies in London (note how orderly they are), Sir David Attenborough addressing us at the House of Commons, and headline from the newspaper.

From London, Denise travelled to Monrovia, Liberia to attend the Blue Oceans Conference. It was the first time an ocean conference had been held in Africa, and it was a fantastic event involving participants from around the globe. Marine pollution was one of the four main themes. Drinking water in sachets is a substantial littering issue in Liberia, a country where there is not a single municipal solid waste facility that is fully operational. There were some exciting examples of projects to create change, including a social enterprise targeting clean drinking water (which can help reduce the need for those water sachets). Denise ranked this meeting as one of the most fun she'd been to – lots of music, singing, dance, and a very engaged network of people including politicians, business people, researchers, and government staff.



Photos: Local business to make inexpensive, safe drinking water (and reduce plastic waste). A warm welcome to Monrovia with local dancers.

From Liberia, Denise travelled to Nairobi, Kenya to participate in a brainstorming session/expert consultation workshop focused on marine litter monitoring and national source inventories. Held at the **United Nations Headquarters**, meetings were sometimes interrupted by naughty monkeys in the corridors or entering the rooms (typically in search of food). This was a great opportunity to learn what various marine debris related

programs are underway at the UN, and where the UN is focusing their efforts to address plastic pollution, particularly as it relates to Sustainability Development Goals.



Photo: United Nations flip flop sailboat and UN flags

It was back home to Tasmania after all that travel, until May, when Denise participated in the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Workshop on Marine Debris Management for Sustainable Fisheries and Food Security in Southeast Asia**. Held in Nha Trang, Viet Nam, in May, Denise presented a summary of findings related to food security and plastic pollution, whilst enjoying the delicious food and coastal beauty offered nearby.



Photo: Morning in Nha Trang, with groups dancing for exercise and the local beach.

Denise took a break from work to spend some time mountain biking during ‘northern’ summer (June). She returned to work to participate in the **Klosters Forum Plastics Innovation Challenge in Switzerland**. The Klosters Forum is a neutral platform that brings together ‘disruptive and inspirational minds to tackle some of the world’s most pressing environmental challenges’. The idea is to convene and connect relevant, committed participants to build collaborations in a unique and intimate environment. The forum brought together NGOs, investors, entrepreneurs (and a few scientists) to create viable solutions. TKF staff interviewed a number of participants, [podcasts can be found here](#), including one featuring Denise!



Photos: The daily commute to where the meetings were held, via gondola from the town of Klosters, and yes, we really had a bugler to start the day in the Swiss Alps.

Marine Litter National Source Inventories, Nairobi

TJ participated in a workshop on Marine Litter National Source Inventories, Nairobi in July. The workshop brought together people from government agencies and NGOs across Kenya to discuss the current state of waste in the nation. Data was a large focus, with discussions on what data currently exists, who the custodians of this data are, and identifying gaps. We also determined a way forward to fill in those knowledge gaps, with CSIRO conducting a survey in Mombasa to kick things off.



Photos: TJ teaches how we do our sampling methods; some roads are tough to travel but we can get there if we try hard.

Chris Wilcox participated in the APEC Working Group meeting, which focused on plastic pollution and Illegal fishing. The meeting was held in Chile, where Chris was a panellist where he provided input the plastics roadmap which was approved.



Photo: Chris looks thoughtful at the APEC working group meeting in Chile.

COBSEA meetings, Bangkok

In November, Qamar attended the United Nations sponsored Sea of Solutions event in Bangkok, Thailand, where she represented the team at a forum entitled “Towards better data - Monitoring, assessment and related technologies”. The forum and related conference activities provided the opportunity to learn about regional initiatives, such as a company making magnetic labels for PET bottles in order to facilitate separation for more efficient recycling, as well as a venue for meeting potential collaborators for future surveys.



Photo: There's a SEA of Solutions - Qamar at COBSEA, Bangkok.

Training and fieldwork

In June, TJ, Tonya and Tim conducted field methods/analysis training in **Bali, Indonesia** with great success. After four intensive days of training at the Faculty of Marine Sciences and Fisheries, Udayana University, the team began fieldwork with around 25 students and NGO volunteers. After TJ, Tonya and Tim returned to Australia, the Bali team continued their work and ended up with around 100 sites surveyed. Data is currently being finalised for analysis.



Kenya and Seychelles training and fieldwork

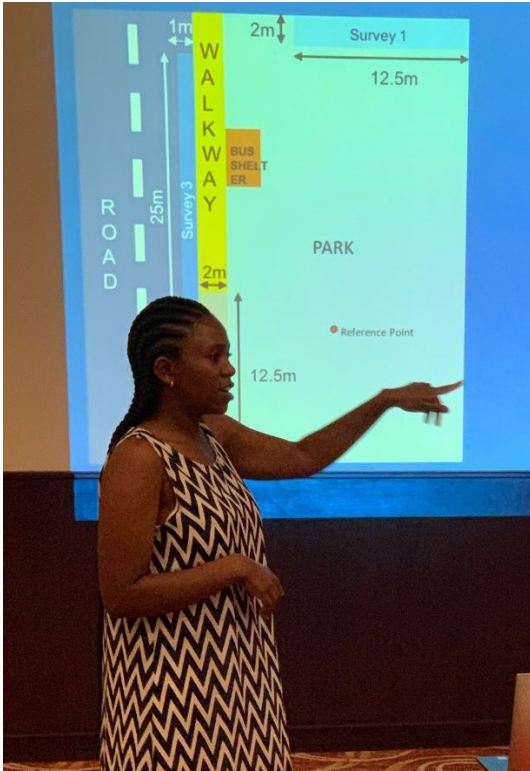
In August 2019, Denise, TJ and Tim travelled to Mombasa, Kenya to work with partners United Nations Environment (UNE), the Kenyan Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) and the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA). There were an impressive number of volunteers that showed up for intensive training, with participants from all over Africa, including Kenya, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria. The CSIRO team ran three full days of global plastics field survey training for volunteers at Diani Beach, followed by six full days of surveying in the surrounding areas. The group split up into four smaller groups of eight to ten participants to conduct a baseline survey of coastal Kenya in the Mombasa region, as well as inland and river sites to monitor sources. Denise and her team covered the area south of Mombasa as far as the Tanzanian border, TJ worked around Mombasa and north of there, while Tim and his team went inland to the area around Voi. David from UNE took a team north of Malindi. The field teams collected data from a fantastic 44 inland sites, 30 river sites, and 24 coastal sites. Around 35 volunteers and NGO staff have developed the skills and knowledge required to continue this important work. Well done to all staff and volunteers!



Photo: The Mombasa field crews coming back together after their time in the field. What great crews we had!

In late August 2019, Denise, TJ and Tim, along with Catherine Sezi Mwalugha from KMFRI travelled to the Seychelles. Over a ten-day period, we successfully completed debris surveys at a total of 81 sites over the island of Mahe. The teams carried out a tremendous number of surveys over seven days, after three days of training. The field teams collected data from a 31 inland sites, 25 river sites, and 25 coastal sites. Around 14 volunteers and NGO staff have developed the skills and knowledge required to continue this important work.





Photos: Team fieldwork in Seychelles, Kate teaching, field teams loving the Mahi forest for inland surveys.



Photo: Kids everywhere love TJ!

After the training workshop in Kenya earlier in the year, Denise travelled to Bali, Indonesia to deliver a Training of Trainers Workshop. Participants hailed from more than 9 countries across the Asia Pacific region – and Denise was thrilled to work alongside GreenHub’s Trang and Pak Gede, both of whom were trainers for the course as well!



Photos: Denise, Pak Gede and Trang together in Bali, Indonesia; Field team on the beach.

Waterkeepers Alliance (WKA) training, in Kisumu, Kenya

In November, we remotely participated in a Train the Trainers event co-sponsored by the Waterkeepers Alliance (WKA), in Kisumu, Kenya. This training represented some significant “firsts” for our team. It was the first time that we had trainers from the local country present the classroom and field training. Angela, Marcel, Kate, and Gilbert attended our sessions in Kenya, and Kate also helped to facilitate training in the Seychelles. The four of them trained a group of 28 volunteers, including two waterkeepers from the United States, one from Australia, two from Mexico, and one from the Bahamas! We at CSIRO supported them from our offices in Tasmania, through video linkups and What’s App messaging. The training went smoothly, and there was an incredibly committed and enthusiastic group of volunteer data collectors!

We could not be more pleased with this level of engagement and new capacity for all!



Photo: Field teams in Kisumu, Kenya.

Partner spotlight

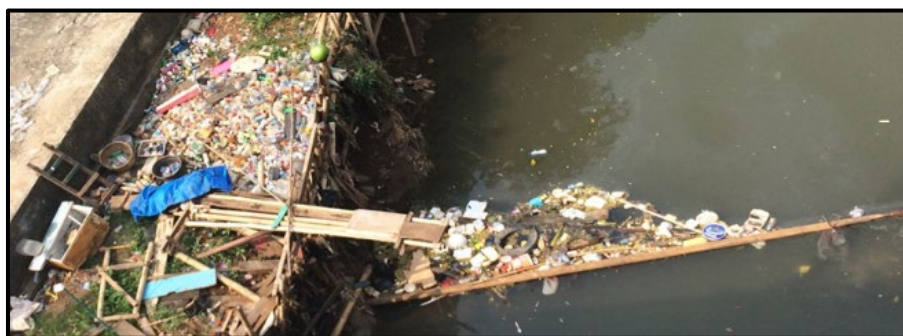
The World Bank recently shone a spotlight on our brilliant collaborator Trang Nguyen. Trang co-founded GreenHub Vietnam, an NGO focused on educating public to stem the tide of plastic pollution. Trang is passionate about enabling and the mobilising young people in Vietnam to build collective solutions to plastic waste. [Read Trang's interview here.](#)

Upcoming events (postponed)

- **Our 2020 Mini-conference has been postponed.** A huge thank you to GreenHub Vietnam for their work in preparing and co-hosting this event, which was to be held in Nha Trang, Vietnam in March 2020. New dates have yet to be determined. If you would like to attend please contact Justine.barrett@csiro.au.
- **Waterkeepers training in Mexico.** This was scheduled for April 2020 but has been postponed. New dates are yet to be confirmed.
- **Towards Zero Plastics to the Seas of Africa.** 20-24 April - the 2nd International Conference of the African Marine Waste Network – conference
- **FIG Working Week, Netherlands.** TJ was scheduled to attend this spatial analysis workshop in May 2020 but due to Covid-19, the meeting has been postponed.
- **Morocco training and fieldwork with Amcor and Earthwatch Australia-** scheduled for October, likely to be postponed.
- **3rd World Seabird Conference.** 19-23 October 2020, Hobart. Unknown if conference will go ahead as planned.

Looking for stories – Informal Solutions Recipes for Success Cookbook!

Do you know of a great ‘informal sector’ solution to plastic pollution that is working in your region? Is someone doing something creative that is working well and helping to reduce plastic waste and plastic pollution? If so, we



want to hear from you as we are putting together a cookbook of recipes for success. Please get in touch if you have a story to share (Denise.Hardesty@csiro.au and leigh.keen@csiro.au). Recipes and photos will be credited to you.

We would love your feedback...

Interested in attending a webinar?

We are willing to run personalised webinars to give you more knowledge on the marine debris survey analyses. The purpose of the webinars are to give you an update on the analysis details and to give you some information on the analysis methods. This training would take place in the comfort of your office or home – all you need is a computer and an internet connection! *Please let us know if you would be interested.*

Data collection

Database

A reminder that our database is online and available for all our partners to use. You can enter survey information, photos and collections data directly into our online database. You must be a registered user to access the site. Email Qamar.Schuyler@csiro.au, Vanessa.Mann@csiro.au, or TJ.Lawson@csiro.au to register.

Access the data base here: <https://marine-data.csiro.au/global-debris>

Dropbox Folder

We have created folders for each individual country in the Dropbox. We have included a sub-folder for photos and would love it if country partners could upload photos from the training and surveys. We especially would like group photos and pictures of the fun and memorable times of the participants.

If you haven't uploaded your transect photos directly onto the database, you can also include survey photos in this folder as well. Please make sure they're labelled properly!

Completed Datasheets Reminder

In addition to having the data entered into the database, we would also like to maintain a library of the completed datasheets to refer to in case of any questions about the data. If you have digital or hard copies of completed datasheets please either post them to us at the following address:

Marine Debris Team
CSIRO Oceans & Atmosphere
GPO Box 1538
Hobart, TAS 7001
Australia

or send scanned copies via email to marinedebrisadmin@csiro.au. **Please scan and email to us before you send anything via the post.** You can also upload to the Dropbox folder which may be easier than email if internet speeds are slow where you are.

Please remember to upload and/or send us your photos of the start and end points of every transect onto the database if you haven't already!

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Contact us

1300 363 400
+61 3 9545 2176
csiroenquiries@csiro.au
csiro.au