



Balloon-Related Litter: 6-Years of Monitoring & Raising Awareness

Christina Trapani, Kathy O'Hara, Katie Register

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Virginia Balloon Study



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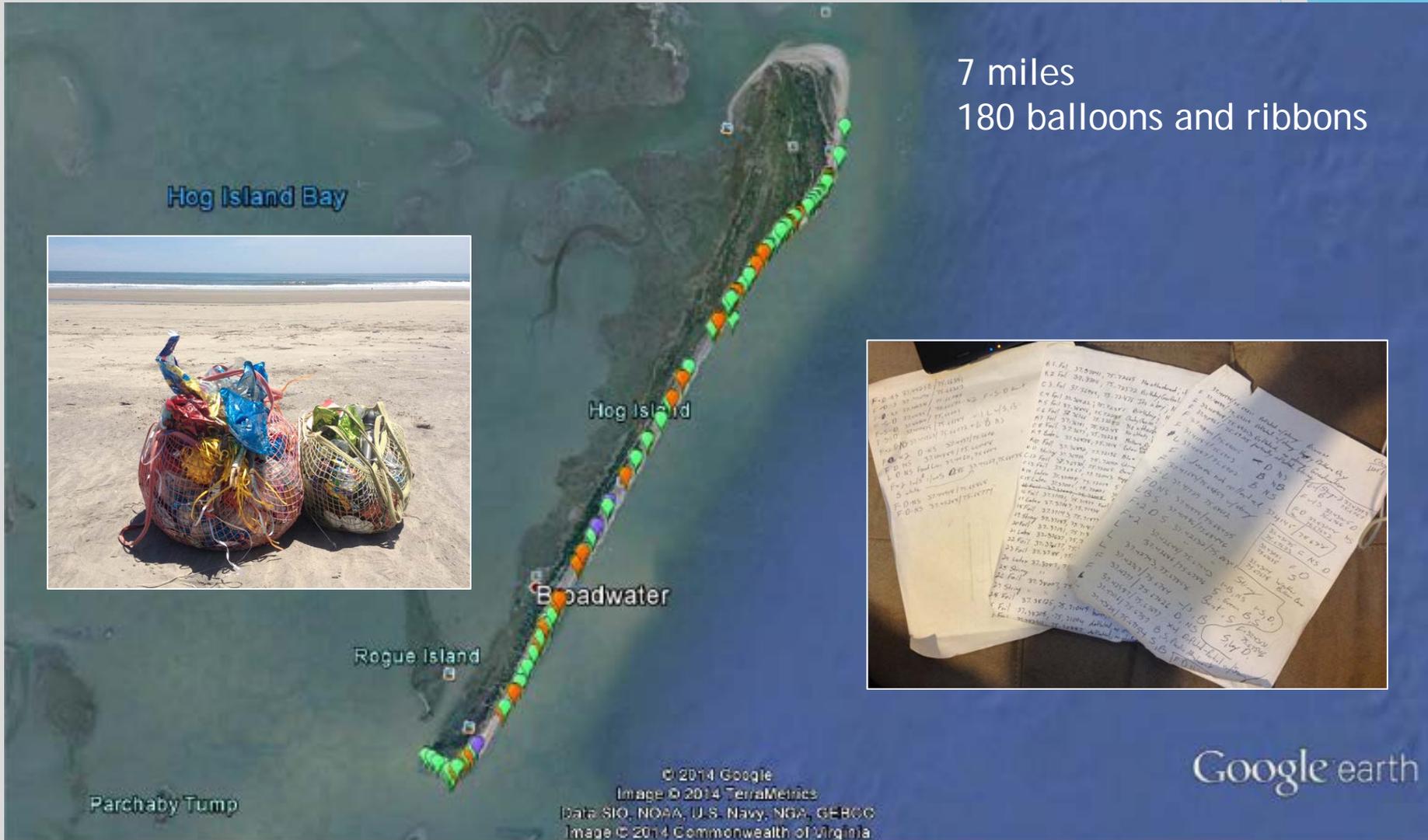
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www.VirginiaBalloonStudy.org

More than 1000 reports since April, 2012



First Survey, Hog Island, June 2013



Virginia's Marine Debris Reduction Plan

October 2014

Developing a Marine Debris Reduction Plan for Virginia

Written and prepared for the Coastal Zone Management Program by:

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Under the direction of:

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Stakeholder facilitation and research by:

Todd Janeski, Virginia Commonwealth University

*Angela Neilan, Community Involvement Specialist, Virginia Department
of Environmental Quality*



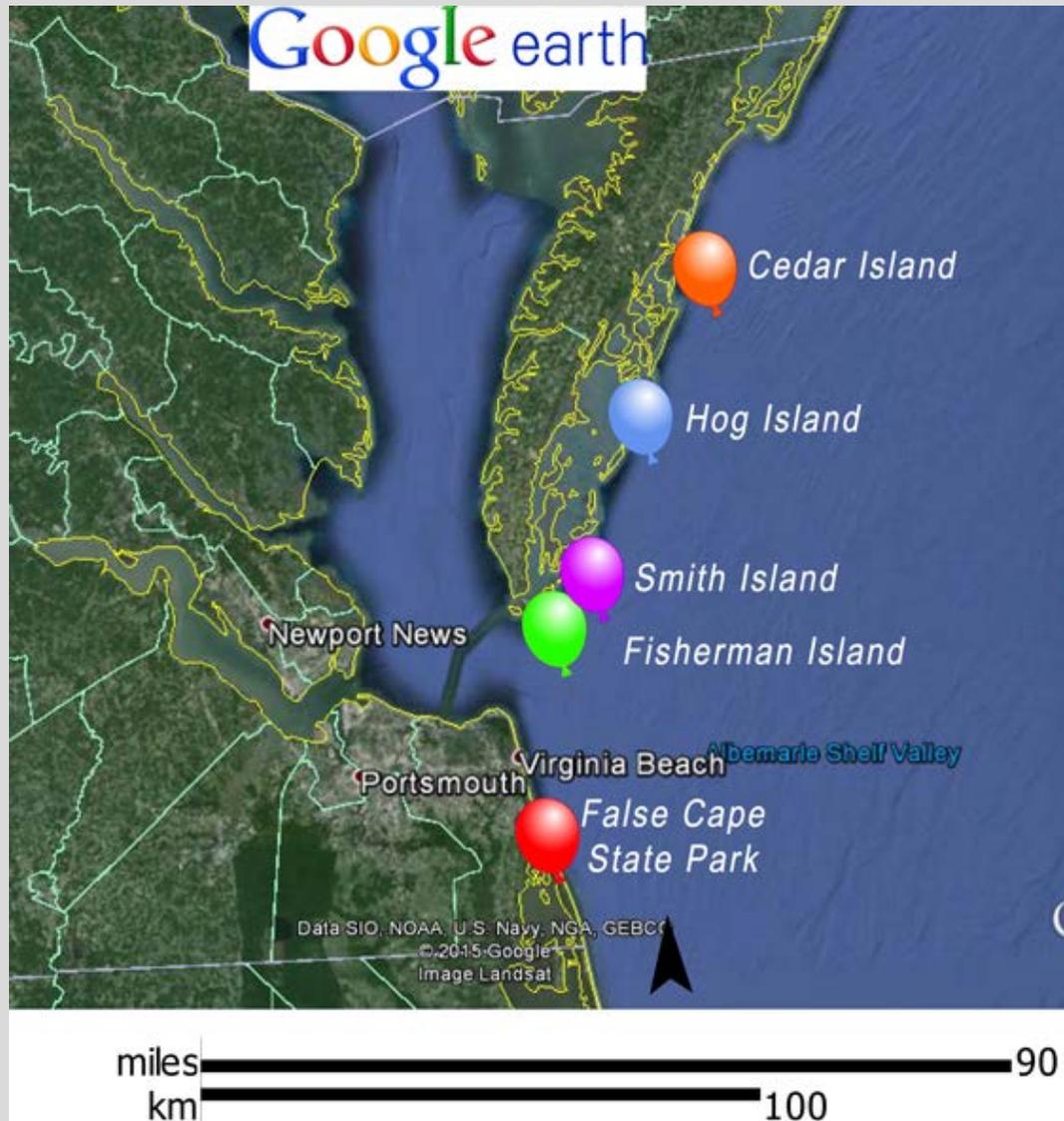
Development of the Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan was funded by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality through Grant NA22NO549022, Task 95.05 and Grant NA22NO549028, Task 95 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Coastal Zone Management, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended.

Reduce land-based marine debris sources (in order of achievability)

1. Plastic bags
2. Cigarette butts and smoking-related litter
3. Balloons from intentional mass releases
4. Beverage containers, straws, and food-related packaging
5. Waste from land-based industrial/manufacturing facilities
6. Uncovered trucks (includes municipal and commercial waste-hauling vehicles)



Monitoring Balloon Litter on Virginia's Remote Beaches



What Information Are We Collecting?



Location: GPS Coordinates
Type: Latex or Foil
Condition: Burst or Deflated
Color, Size, Shape
Attachments?
Ribbon?
Writing?
Occasions/Events
Business or Organization?
Location on Beach
Other notes?



46 Surveys: 11,441 Balloons, Ribbons & Attachments

Balloon Litter on Virginia's Remote Beaches

Results of Monitoring from 2013 through 2017



A report from Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University to the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program for the FY16 Task 94.03 Grant

August 2018

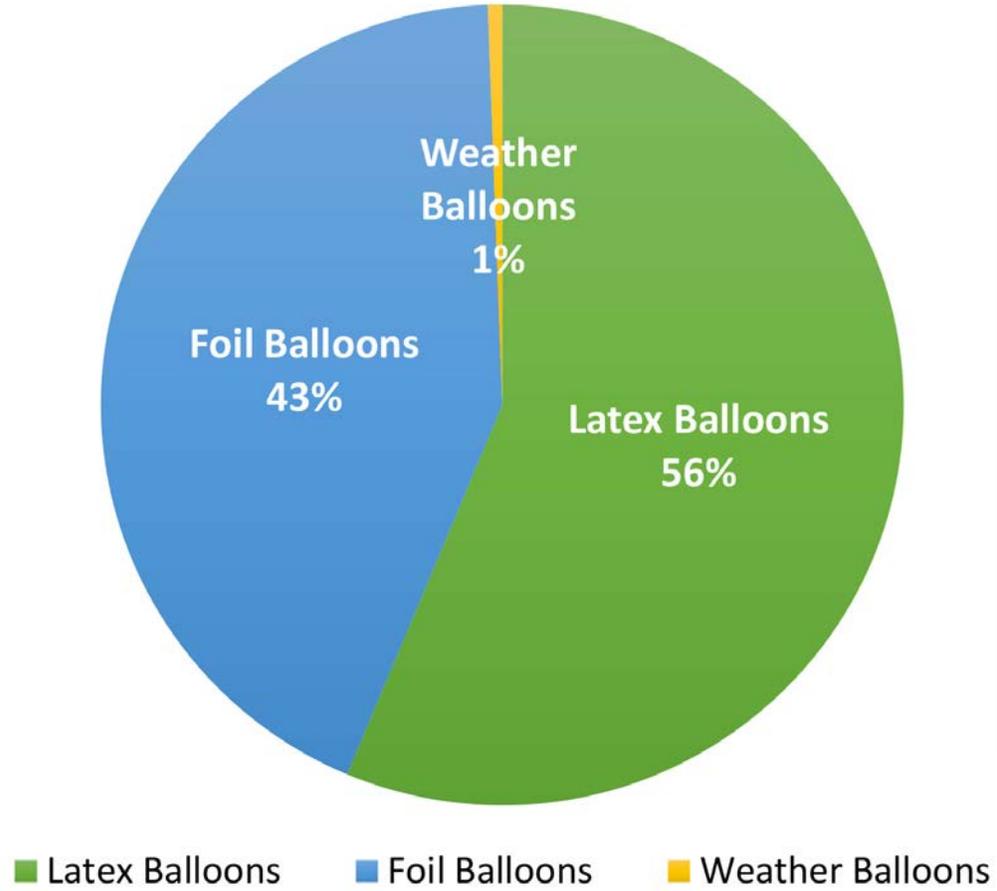
Location	# of Surveys	Total Miles Surveyed	Total Pieces of Balloon-Related Litter	Average Pieces of Balloon-Related Litter Per Mile
Cedar Island	6	21	822	39.1
Hog Island	10	37.9	3197	84.4
Smith Island	6	15.8	1687	106.8
Fisherman Island	12	14.2	2872	202.3
False Cape State Park	9	22.1	2319	104.9
Totals	43	111	10,897	107.5



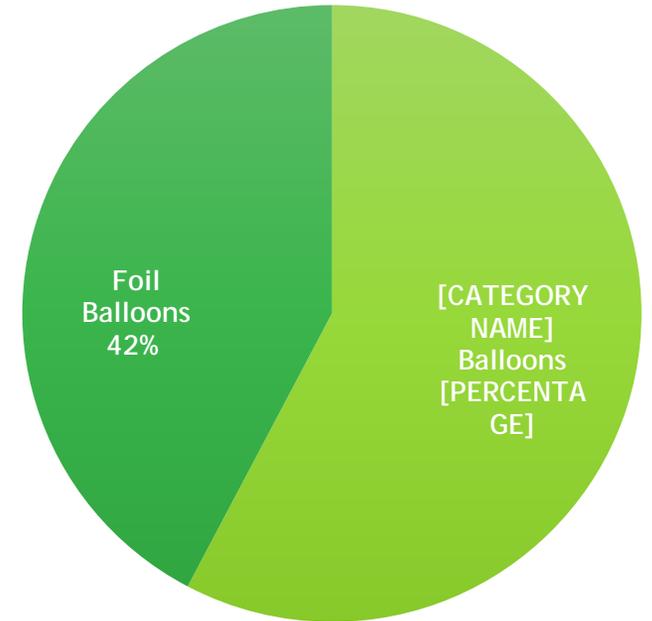
Balloon Types



Balloon Types (2013-2017)

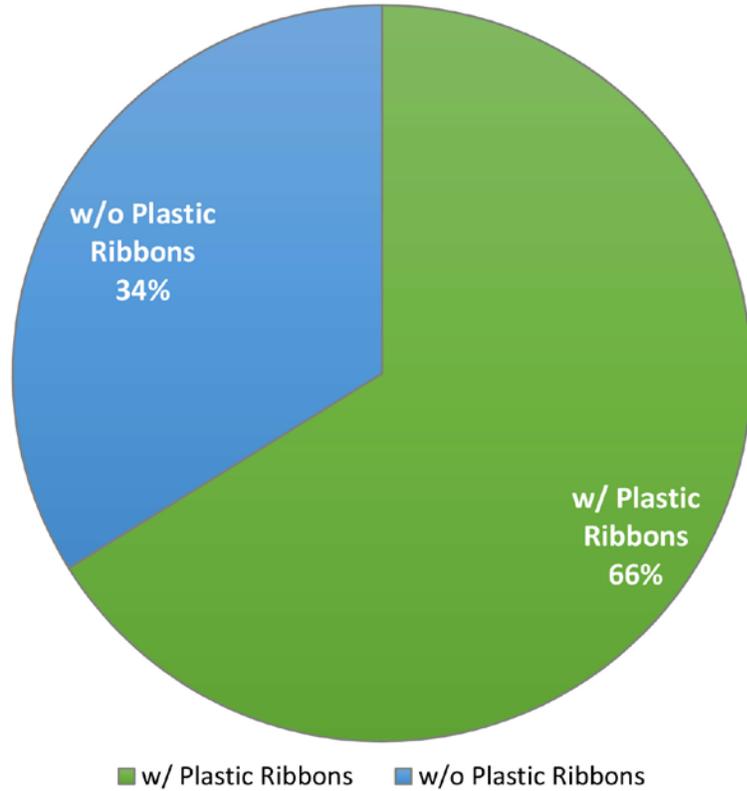


Balloon Types (2018-2019)

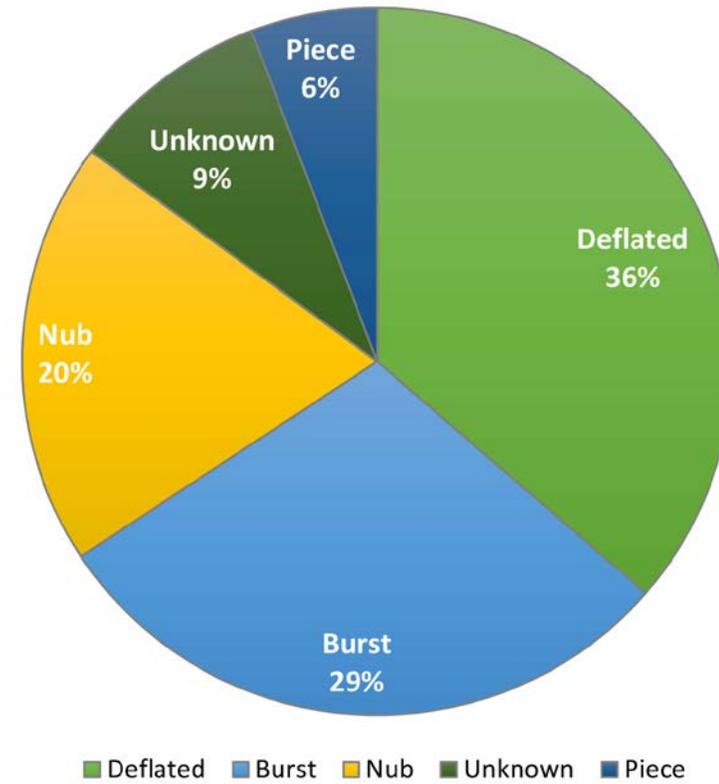


Ribbons & Condition

Balloons With and Without Plastic Ribbons (2013-2017)



Condition of All Balloons (Latex and Foil) (2013-2017)



Balloons with Characters

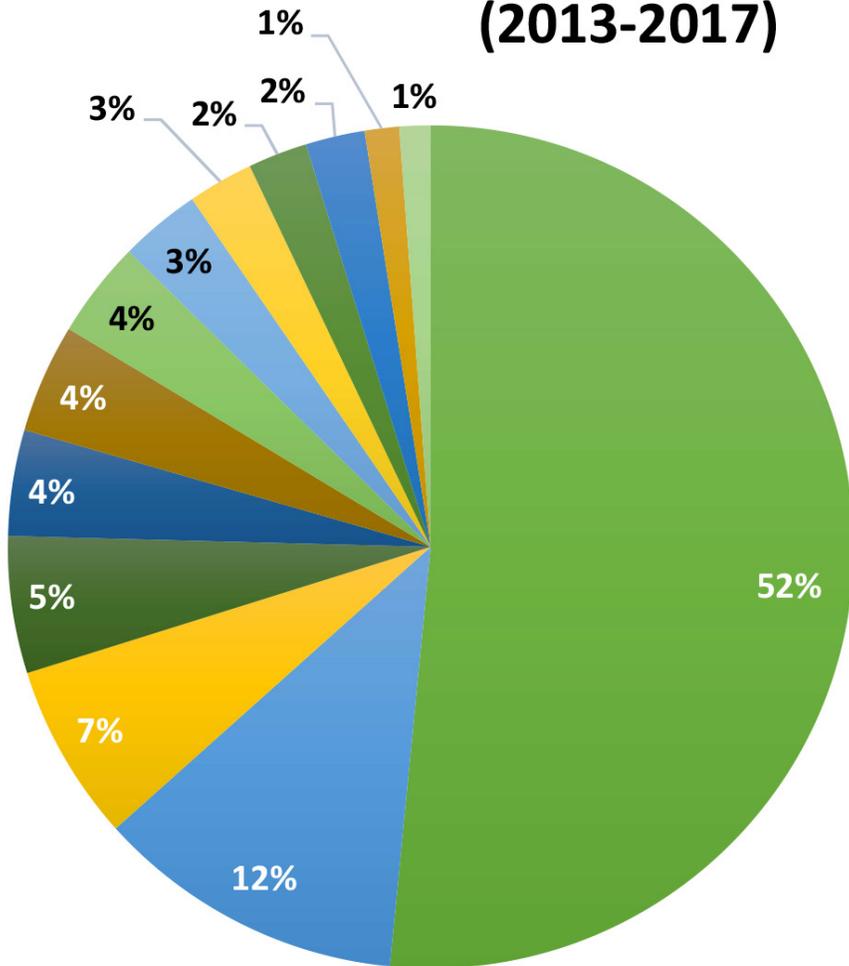
Characters	Number
Smiley	32
Spiderman	25
Mickey	23
Minnie	10
Elmo	8
SpongeBob	7
Emojis	6
Frozen Princess	5
Garfield	5
Minion	5
Cars	3
Ninja Turtles	3
Paw Patrol	3
Peppa Pig	3
Princesses	3
Sesame Street	3
Tinkerbell	3
Batman	2
Curious George	2
Frozen	2
Frozen Snowman	2
Hello Kitty	2
Thomas Train	2
Toy Story	2
Trolls	2
Avengers	1
Bubble Guppies	1
Disney Fairies	1
Disney Monster	1
Disney Other	1
Justice League	1
Little Mermaid	1
Ponies	1
Star Wars	1
Superman	1
Transformers	1
Total	174



Balloons with Events



Balloons with Events (2013-2017)

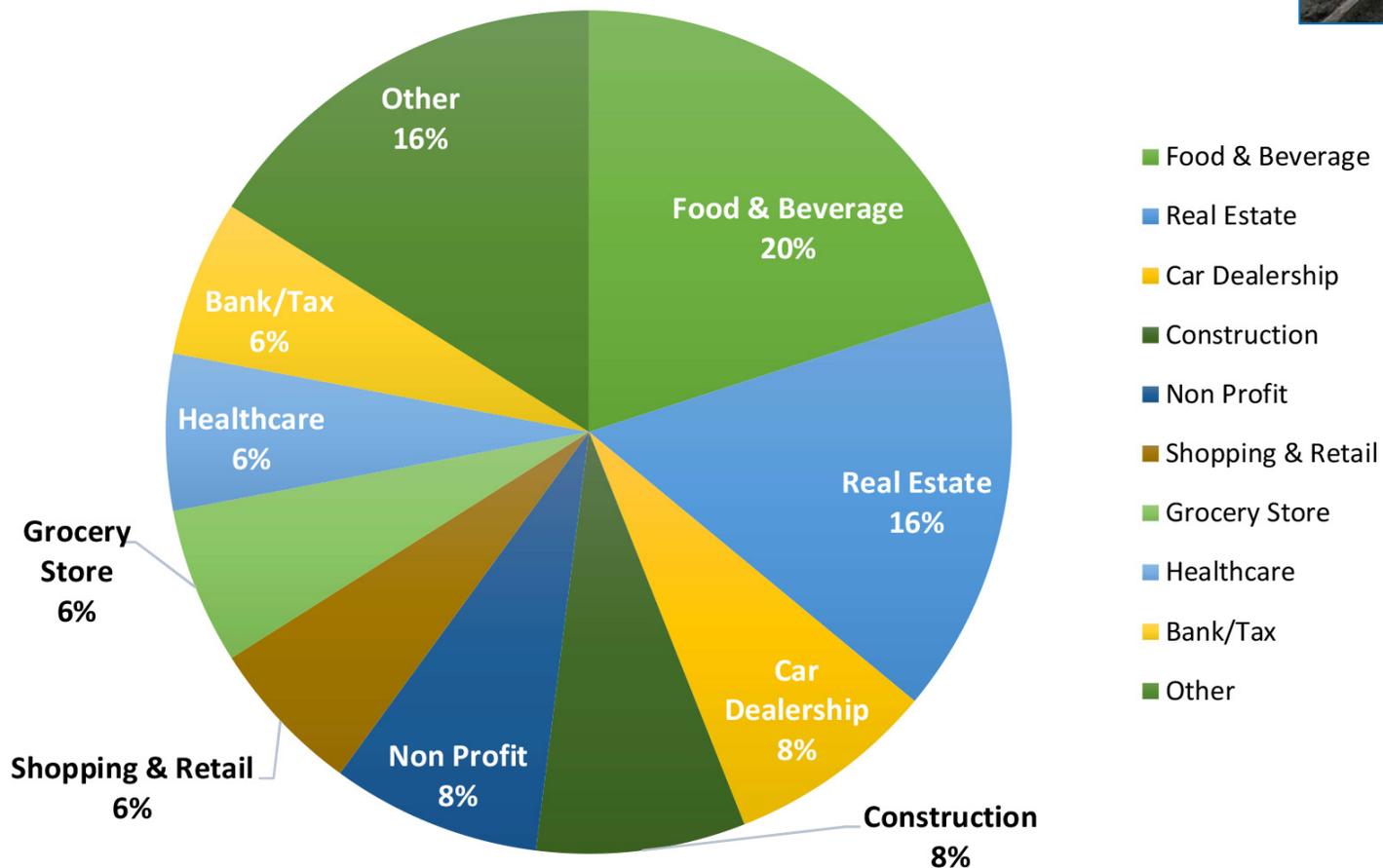


- Happy Birthday (52%)
- Graduation (12%)
- Mother's Day (7%)
- Other (5%)
- Baby (4%)
- Congratulations (4%)
- Get Well (4%)
- Valentine's Day (3%)
- Happy Holidays (3%)
- Love (2%)
- It's Your Day (2%)
- You're Special (1%)



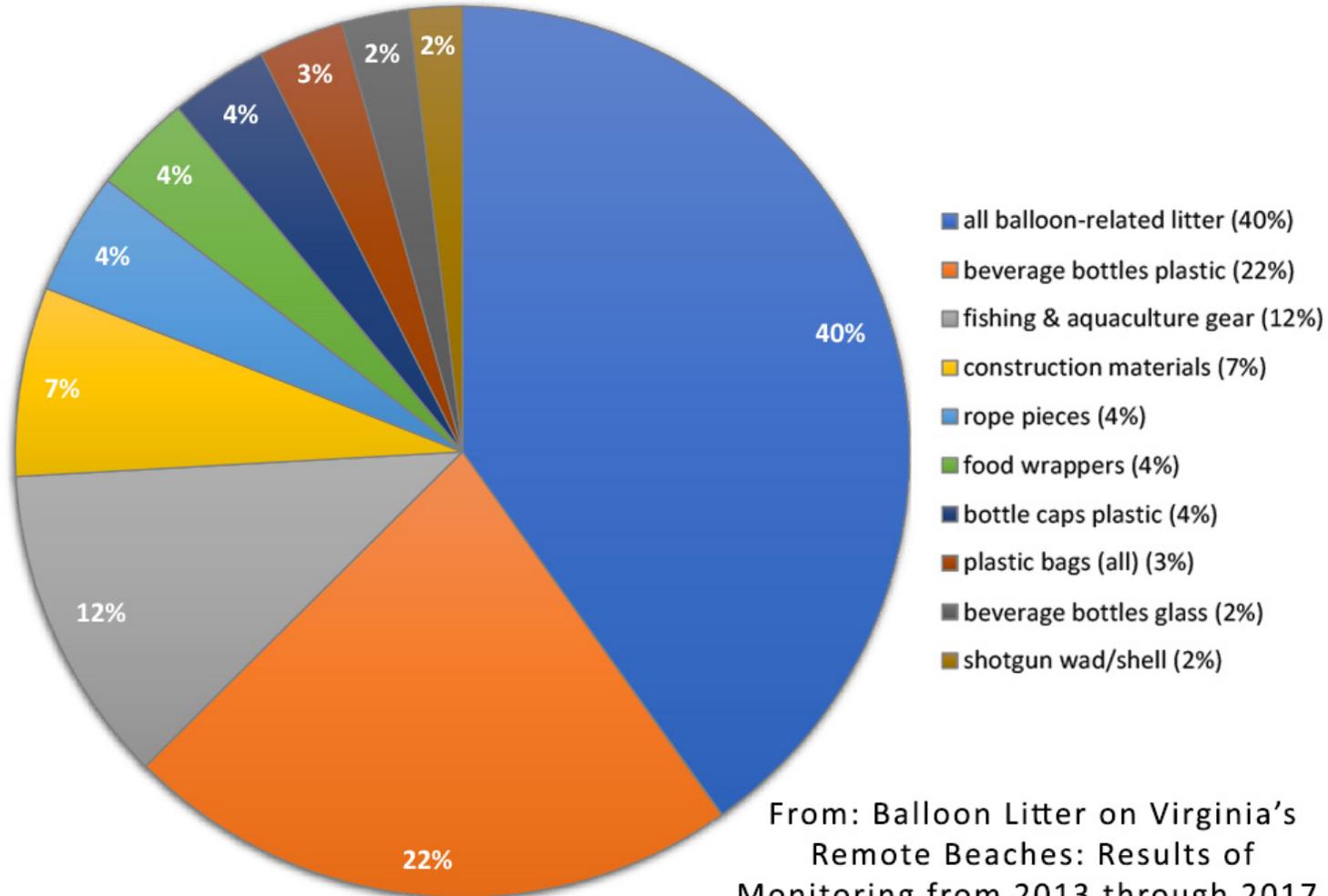
Balloons with Logos

Occurrence of Name and/or Logo Balloons by Category (2013-2017)



Monitoring Balloon Litter on Virginia's Remote Beaches

Top 10 Marine Debris Items on Virginia's Remote Beaches, 2013-2017.



From: Balloon Litter on Virginia's Remote Beaches: Results of Monitoring from 2013 through 2017.

Will the Balloon Litter Issue Resolve Itself?

Detroit Free Press HOME NEWS SPORTS AUTOS THINGS TO DO RESTAURANTS IMPACT MORE  [Subscribe](#)

Global helium shortage is a growing threat to graduation parties and scientific research

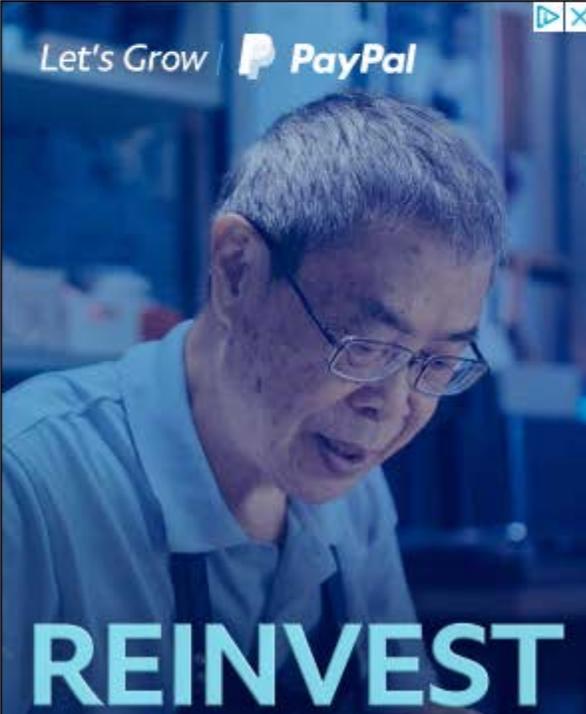
Frank Witsil, Detroit Free Press Published 6:01 a.m. ET May 8, 2019 | Updated 11:51 a.m. ET May 8, 2019

We recognize that, even though the product is biodegradable, some people are going to consider releasing a balloon to be littering. And while balloon releases can be very beautiful events, if you're offending a lot of people by it, it's not the thing to do.

DAN FLYNN
Balloon Council chairman

USA TODAY

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Helium-filled latex balloons have drawn increased attention because of the potential dangers they can cause to the environment. Some states are working to limit how many are released, while others wish to ban balloons altogether. USA TODAY



Worth the Weight: The Balloon Council says balloons should not be released.

After years of thoughtful consideration, monitoring national and international trends and getting feedback from our diverse audience of balloon related businesses and balloon friends, TBC has decided to revise our stance on balloon releases.

"In the past TBC didn't advocate for or against balloon releases, we advised people on the best practices to minimize environmental impact such as only using latex and not adding strings," said TBC Chairman Dan Flynn. "Over the years, as the social and political climates have changed, our position has also evolved. This change in stance fully recognizes the need for everyone to be as 'green' as we possibly can be to protect our planet."

The revised Balloon Release stance reads:

Worth the Weight: The Balloon Council says balloons should not be released. Americans love balloons, but for many reasons no longer support balloon releases. Balloon makers have worked hard to share and inspire the use of Smart Balloon Practices to keep balloons available for every occasion.

We stand with communities by encouraging that balloons be weighted, not released outdoors, and disposed of properly when broken or deflated. Whether it's a single balloon or hundreds, let's keep them from flying away.



Awareness and Legislation are on the Rise

LOCAL ELECTIONS > Posted June 11 | Updated June 12

INCREASE FONT SIZE

Kennebunk voters give overwhelming approval to ban on balloon releases

The ordinance was championed by a local teenager who cites the impact balloons have on sea life when they end up in the ocean.

BY GILLIAN GRAHAM STAFF WRITER

Share



Ban balloon releases for the benefit of wildlife

2

Published May 16, 2019 4:15PM

Connecticut's proposed ban on releasing helium balloons would help keep the state beautiful and protect wildlife.

Balloon releases that take place at weddings, graduations, memorials, and other events send hundreds or thousands of balloons up into the atmosphere. But when deflated balloons return to earth, they wreak havoc.

Bill would ban release of balloons into Guam's atmosphere

Staff Reports, Pacific Daily News/USA TODAY Network Published 5:34 p.m. ChT June 7, 2019



Community Corner

Intentional Balloon Release Ban Weighed By Lawmakers

Some states are seeking to ban balloon releases, citing environmental and wildlife concerns. Do you think NY should ban balloon releases?

By Lisa Finn, Patch Staff
Jun 2, 2019 8:26 am ET



Reply (30)



Lawmakers in several states consider making balloon releases illegal

POSTED 12:21 PM, APRIL 28, 2019, BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

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PORTLAND, Maine — The tradition of releasing balloons at weddings, birthdays and memorials may soon get deflated by lawmakers in more than half a dozen states.

Critics say the helium-filled balloons pollute the environment, and threaten birds and

they fall

realize th

Lydia Bl

Balloon launch ban? More states aim to knock air out of festive balloon releases

Posted: May 16, 2019 10:22 PM EDT
Updated: May 30, 2019 10:22 PM EDT

By Elizabeth Taylor [CONNECT](#)

By David Sharp

Sunday, April 28, 2019

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The tradition of releasing balloons at weddings, birthdays and memorials may soon get deflated by lawmakers in more than half a dozen states.

Critics say the helium-filled balloons pollute the environment and threaten birds and other wildlife when they fall to earth.

"People don't really realize that it's littering. That's why we want to bring attention to this," said state Rep. Lydia Blume, who's supporting a balloon bill in Maine. "It's a common sense thing."

Nationwide, there's a growing awareness of the problem, and it has energized legislation in state governments. Bills to limit the intentional release of large numbers of balloons are being aired in legislatures in Arizona, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and



Council to ban balloon releases in crackdown on plastics in Birmingham

Councillors vow to tackle plastic 'scourge' and improve 'appalling' recycling rates

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By [Carl Jackson](#) Local Democracy Reporter
12:07, 12 JUN 2019 | UPDATED 12:15, 12 JUN 2019

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Virginia Balloon Release Law

§ 29.1-556.1. Release of certain balloons prohibited; civil penalty.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly release or cause to be released into the atmosphere within a one-hour period fifty or more balloons which are (i) made of a nonbiodegradable or nonphotodegradable material or any material which requires more than five minutes' contact with air or water to degrade and (ii) inflated with a substance which is lighter than air. Any person who violates this section shall be liable for a civil penalty not to exceed five dollars per balloon released above the allowable limit, which shall be paid into the Lifetime Hunting and Fishing Endowment Fund established pursuant to § 29.1-101.1
- B. The provisions of this section shall not apply to (i) balloons released by or on behalf of any agency of the Commonwealth, or the United States or pursuant to a contract with the Commonwealth, the United States, or any other state, territory or government for scientific or meteorological purposes or (ii) hot air balloons that are recovered after launch. (1991, c. 607.)



Despite Education, Laws and Balloon Council stance...



Ed Obermeyer You should try to find out who the organization is that is grouped on the beach letting all those balloons loose and educate them!
Like · Reply · 3w 12

↳ **Diane Campbell-Floyd** replied · 1 Reply

William Russell Ferris Drones were deployed, balloons popped and retrieved. All perps on the beach dealt with.
Like · Reply · 3w 8

Eddie DuRant What idiots?!?! City of Virginia Beach should outlaw balloon releases especially at the frickin' oceanfront!!!!
Like · Reply · 3w - Edited 19

Most Relevant is selected, so some replies may have been filtered out.

John Wright Eddie DuRant isn't it already illegal everywhere?
Like · Reply · 3w 2

↳ View 7 more replies

Wendy Adams Swoope People are stupid
Like · Reply · 3w 1

Write a comment... 😊 📷 GIF 🗨️



A Law Change in Virginia: The Time is Now!



What we have...

Balloon Monitoring Reports

Joyful Send-Off

Laws in other states and cities

Virginia Balloon Study

To do...

Online Petition (Change.org?)

Paper Petition

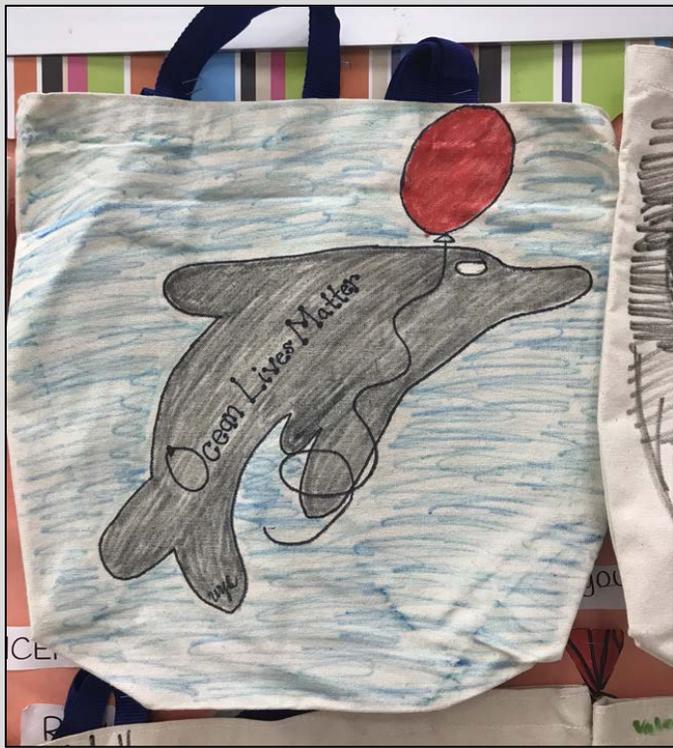
Petition for Kids

Build Statewide Partnerships

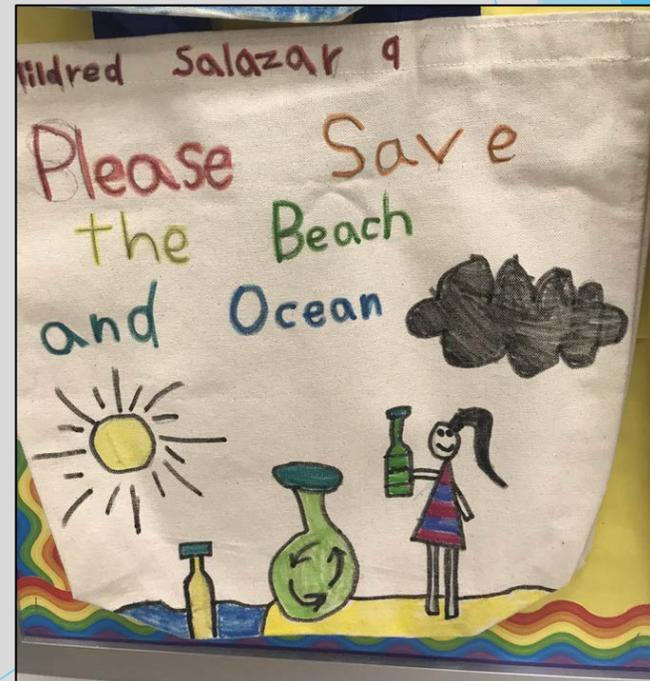
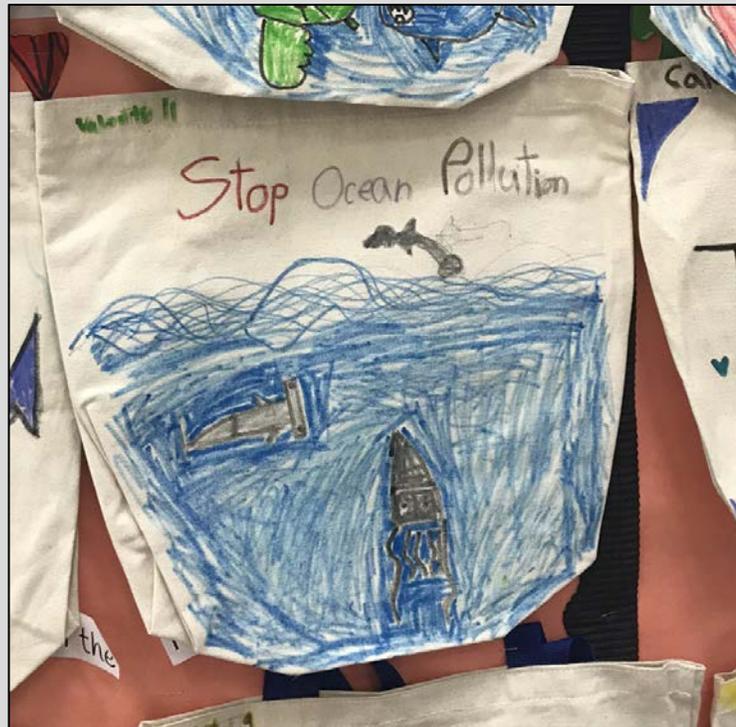
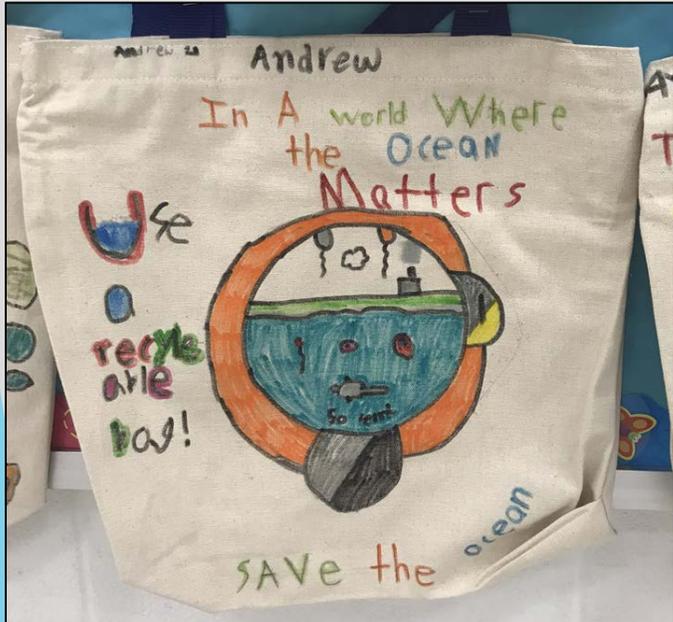
Find Statewide Delegate Support

Other?

Don't Worry! The Kids Are On Board



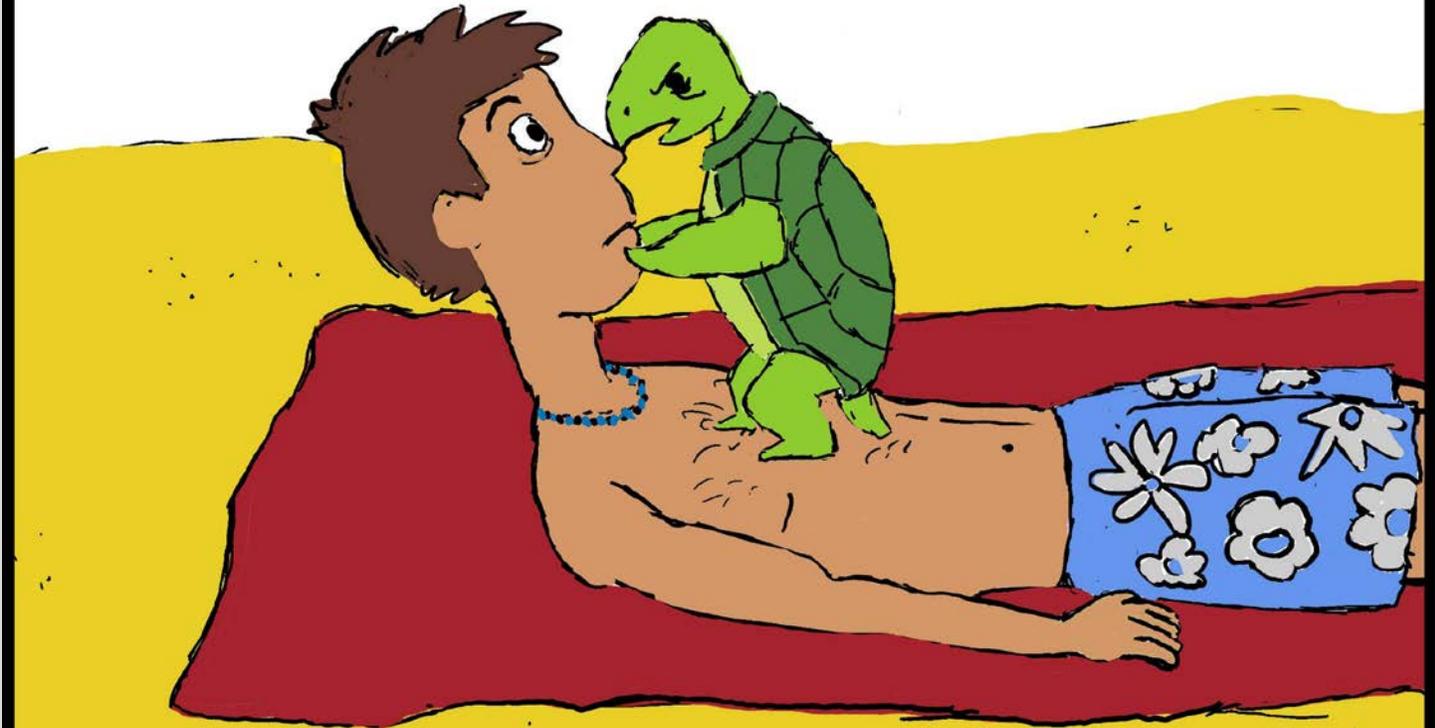
Marie Culver



Thank you!

- My partners and mentors: Katie Register (Clean Virginia Waterways) & Kathy O'Hara
- Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
- NOAA Marine Debris Program
- Alex Wilke, The Nature Conservancy
- Ruth Boettcher, Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Pam Denmon, Fisherman Island NWR
- Lauren Mowbry, Back Bay NWR
- Kevin Holcomb, Chincoteague NWR
- My brave and tolerant volunteers, especially Glen Fields, Jennifer Jeffers and Cathy Roberts.

If I Find One More Stinkin'
Balloon In My Ocean...



www.EcoManiacCompany.com