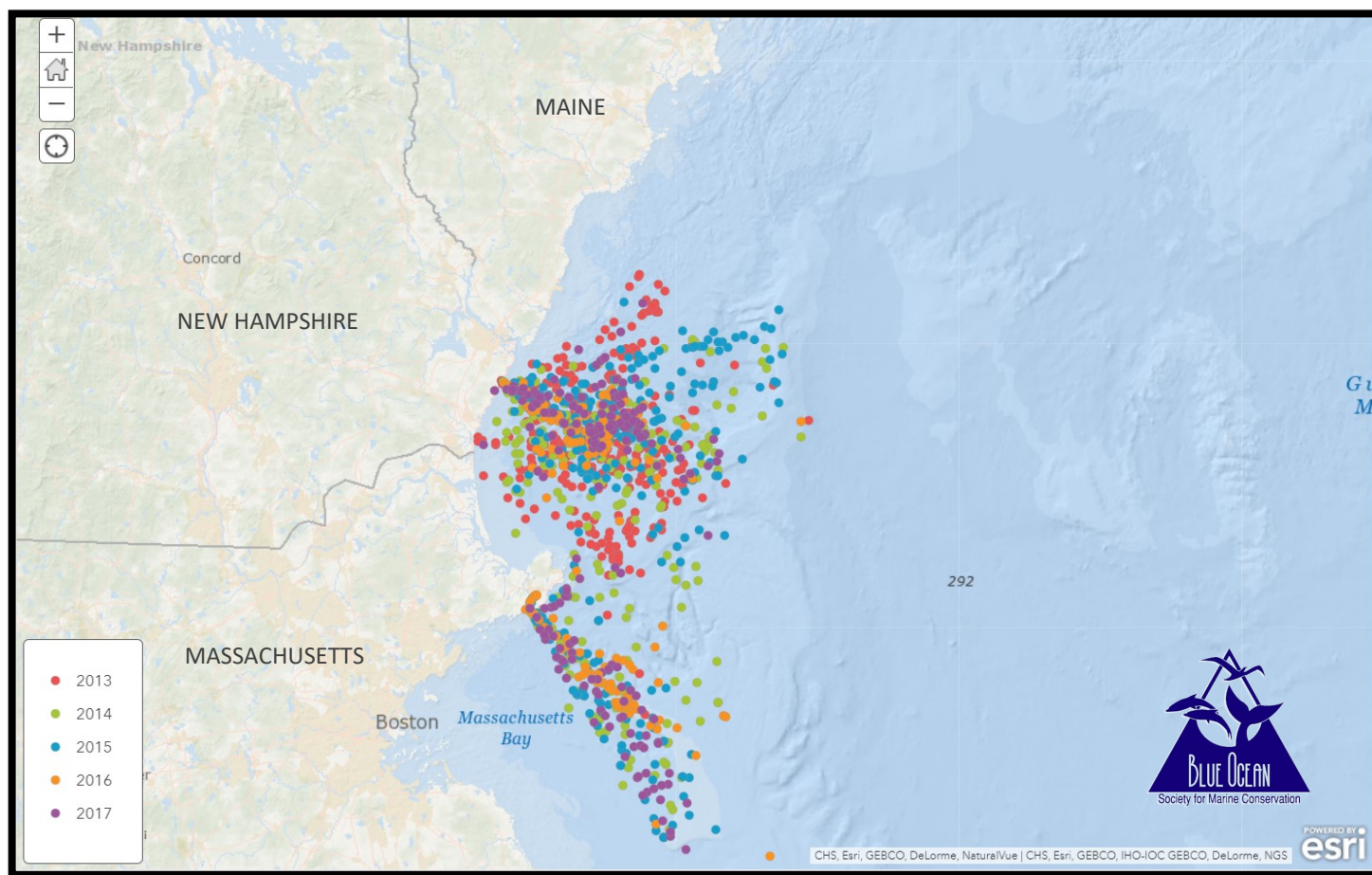


# Plastic Bags on the Ocean, 2013-2017

Seen from whale watch boats departing from Rye, NH, Hampton, NH, Newburyport, MA and Gloucester, MA

Note: Type of bag was not always specified or identifiable - may be a grocery bag, trash bag, ice bag, chip bag, ziploc bag, etc.

Total of 1,364 bags sighted



Year	Number of Bags Sighted	Total Number of Trips
2013	389	353
2014	243	283
2015	337	368
2016	178	344
2017	217	296

# Plastic Bags on the Ocean, 2013-2017

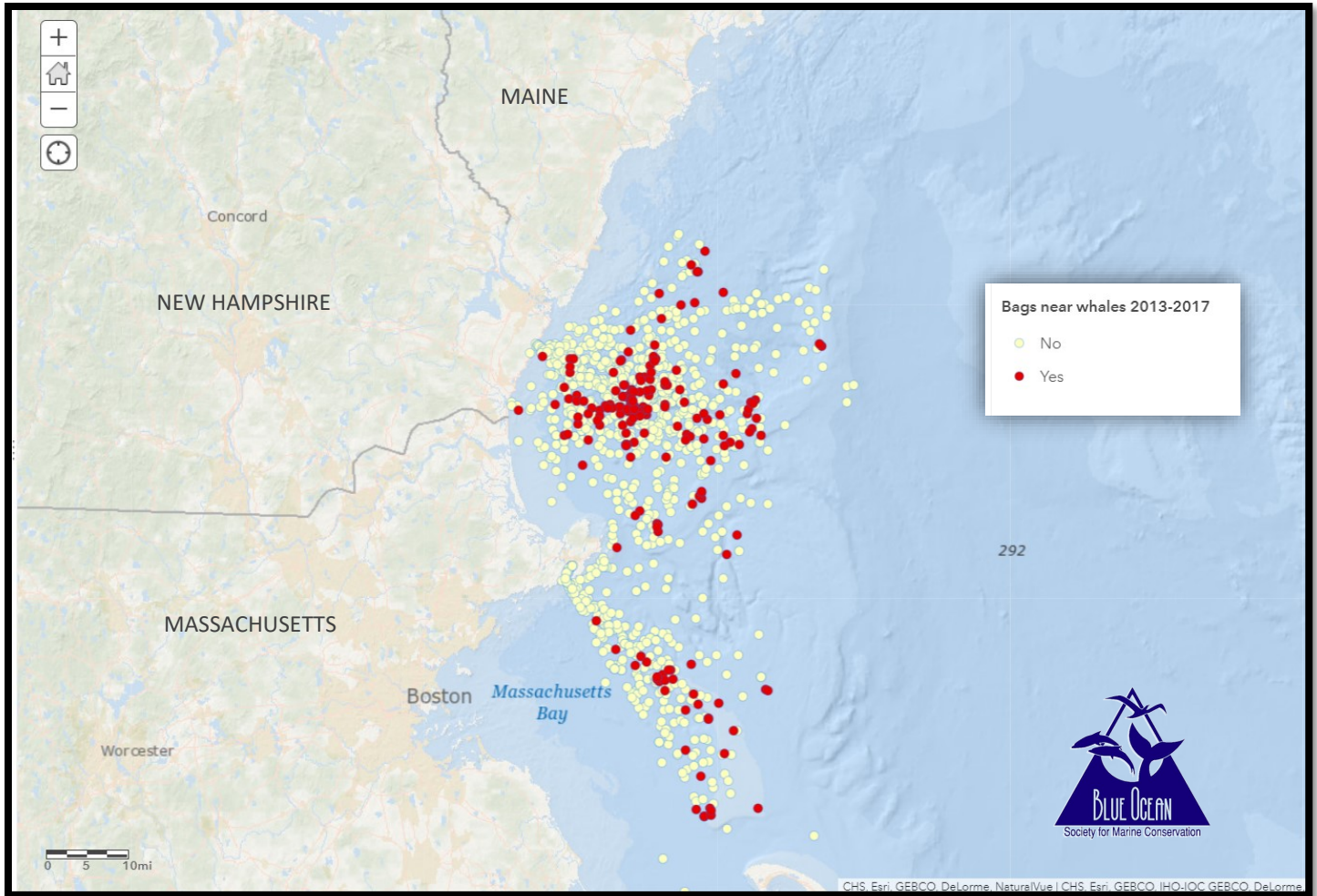
*Seen from whale watch boats departing from Rye, NH, Hampton, NH, Newburyport, MA and Gloucester, MA*

*Note: Type of bag was not always specified or identifiable - may be a grocery bag, trash bag, ice bag, chip bag, ziploc bag, etc.*

Total of 1,364 bags sighted.

Red = Seen near whale (189 events, or 15%)    Yellow: Not near whale (1102 events, or 85%)

Near whale: within ~100 feet





## Reducing Plastic Pollution

### **Support: LD 1532** *An Act to Eliminate Single-use Plastic Carry-out Bags*

**Sponsored by:** Rep. Holly Stover of Boothbay

**Co-sponsored by:** Sen. Sanborn of Cumberland, Rep. Babine of Scarborough, Rep. Brennan of Portland, Rep. Gramlich of Old Orchard Beach, Rep. Nicole Grohoski of Ellsworth, Rep. Marean of Hollis, Rep. McCrea of Fort Fairfield, Rep. McDonald of Stonington, Rep. Meyer of Eliot, and Rep. O'Neil of Saco

**Now is the time for the entire state of Maine to stop using plastic shopping bags.**

For more information, please contact Sarah Lakeman, (207) 430-0170 or [slakeman@nrcm.org](mailto:slakeman@nrcm.org)



**Natural Resources  
Council of Maine**

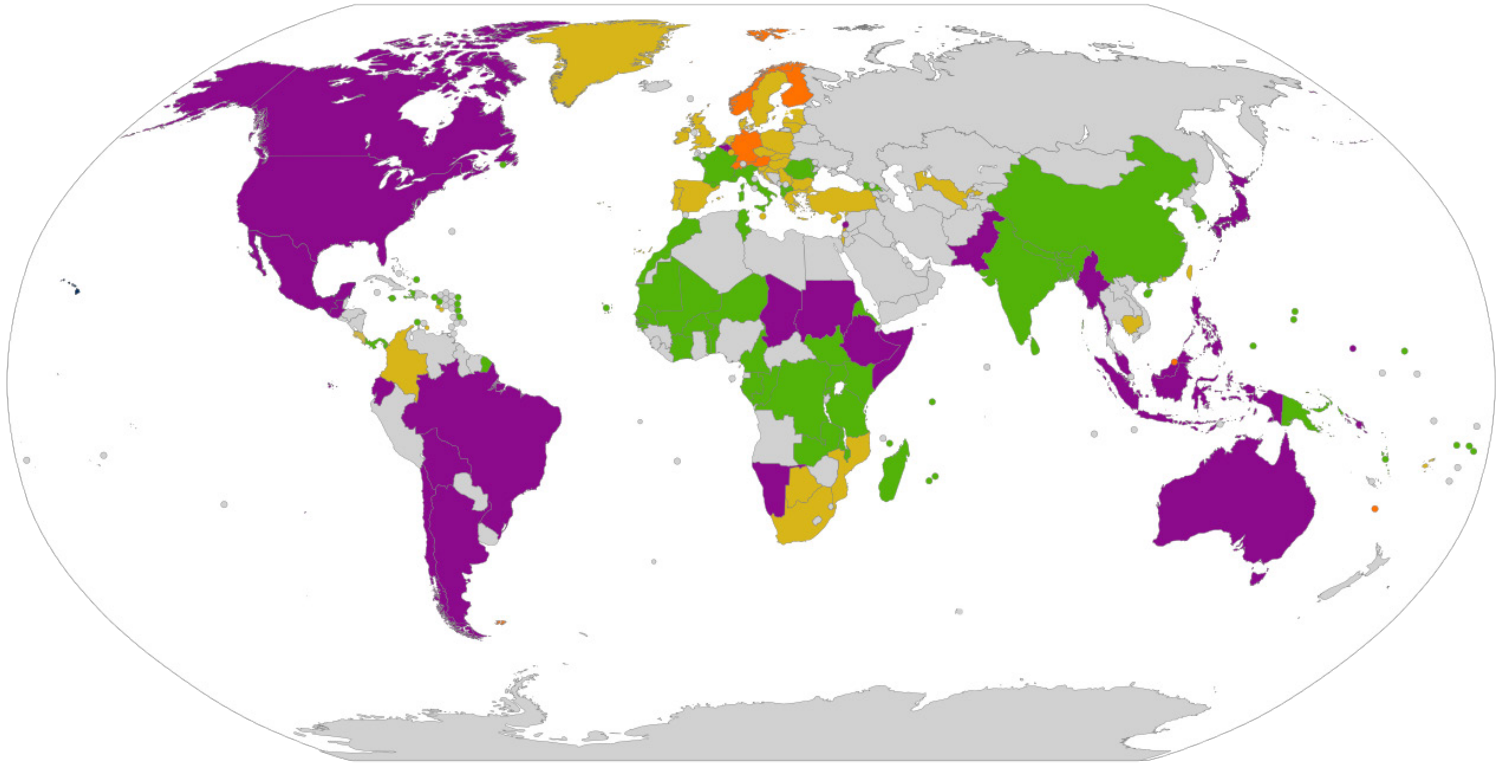
3 Wade Street  
Augusta, ME 04330  
(207) 622-3101  
[nrcm.org](http://nrcm.org)

**Scientists say that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, ton for ton. Globally, about 1 million plastic shopping bags are distributed per minute, and only 1% are recycled.**

- Countless whales, sea turtles, and birds suffer slow, painful deaths and injuries from plastic bag pollution when they mistake the bags for food or get entangled. Plastic bags are the fourth most common type of plastic litter, based on a compilation of nationwide data sets.
- Plastic bags cannot be recycled with other recyclables. When bags are mistakenly placed in recycling bins, they can escape into the environment, jam recycling equipment, and contaminate the recycling stream, which is costly and wasteful.
- Plastic shopping bags have only been used since 1977. Today there are readily available reusable alternatives that cause far less damage to our environment. An incentive helps remind people to use reusable bags.
- Since 2014, 20 Maine towns—home to about 20% of the state's population—have passed ordinances to limit single-use plastic shopping bags.

**LD 1532 would make Maine's single-use plastic shopping bag rules consistent, and help our state do its part to address the plastic pollution problem. The bill would:**

- Prohibit the distribution of plastic shopping bags at the point of sale at all retail establishments in Maine.
- Place a minimum five-cent fee on paper bags available at the point of sale at large retailers that sell food, to provide an incentive for shoppers to use reusable bags.
- Require paper bags be made of recycled content and ensure that they are recyclable.
- Excuses participants in SNAP and WIC programs from paying the paper bag fee.



By Elekh - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32400659>

### Phase-out of Light-weight Plastic Bags Around the World



**As of April 1, 2019, the following Maine towns, which comprise 20% of the state's population, have enacted bag ordinances:**

Bath	Cape Elizabeth	Manchester	Saco
Belfast	Damariscotta	Newcastle	South Portland*
Blue Hill	Falmouth*	Portland*	Southwest Harbor
Brunswick	Freeport	Rockland	Topsham*
Camden	Kennebunk	Rockport	Waterville
			York

\* denotes town with a plastic bag fee rather than a plastic bag ban



**Natural Resources Council of Maine**  
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## Tips to Help you “Break Up with the Bag”

*The Natural Resources Council of Maine is committed to helping people help the environment. We believe that a healthy environment is crucial to a healthy us.*

*Single-use plastic shopping bags are trashing our landscape, choking wildlife, and are a major source of pollution in the U.S. and across the globe. Scientists predict that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, by weight.*

*Switching to reusable shopping bags is one of the best ways Mainers can help stem the tide of plastic waste that threatens our environment. We can do better, for our kids and for our future.*

### Make the Switch!

Check out these low- to no-cost ways to get a reusable shopping bag:

- **Make a Bag** You can find instructions on the back of this sheet on how to make a 10-minute, no-sew, no cost t-shirt bag.
- **Get a Freebie at an Event or Class** Free, reusable bags are a frequent giveaway at local events.
- **Collect and Clynk** Redeem bottles and cans at Clynk, and use the funds to purchase a reusable bag, available at grocery stores, often for less than \$1.00.
- **Get Thrifty** Shop for reusable bags at flea markets, garage sales, and thrift stores.

### Provide Reusable Bags to Your Neighbors

- **Set Up a Take a Bag, Leave a Bag Program** Just like take a penny, leave a penny, work with stores to make a place where customers who have enough bags to share can leave extras for people who need a bag.
- **Hold a Food Drive** Ask people to donate food in a reusable bag that recipients can keep.
- **Host a T-shirt Bag-making Party** Invite Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, school environmental clubs, or other community groups to make many bags that can be given away.
- **Run a Reusable Bag Drive** Make requests to the community in the newspaper or on social media to donate reusable bags to charitable organizations.
- **Talk with Local Nonprofits and Businesses** See if they give away promotional bags. Get the word out in the paper or on social media.

For more information, please contact Chrissy Adamowicz, (207) 430-0144 or [cadamowicz@nrcm.org](mailto:cadamowicz@nrcm.org)



## How to Make a Reusable Tee Shirt Bag

Have a favorite tee shirt that you are ready to retire, but not ready to part with? Turn it into a stylish tote!

You will need: 1 shirt and 1 pair of scissors



### Step 1

Lay the shirt flat. Cut off the sleeves and neck.

### Step 2

Cut slits one inch apart along the bottom of the shirt.



### Step 3

Keep the slits lined up and starting with one end tie the aligning front and back pieces together in double knots until you have done the entire row. To hide the fringe, turn the shirt inside out first.



### Voila!

Use your new bag to do all your shopping!

**Note:** NRCM has a limited number of retired, unused NRCM t-shirts available if you would like to stop by our office in Augusta to pick up a few for this project. Please contact [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org) to check availability.



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