

# The biogeographic footprint of plastic litter in the marine environment

Maria Dieckmann, Master Thesis

With an increase of the plastic production in the last decades, the produced plastic waste has risen, too. Parts of the waste escape into the environment, where they accumulate, especially in the oceans. Increasing numbers of studies provide data on the amount and distribution of waste in the oceans, and web-based information platforms, e.g. LITTERBASE ([www.litterbase.awi.de](http://www.litterbase.awi.de)), have been developed to make existing knowledge more easily available. But a detailed assessment of which biogeographical regions are most affected, and a classification of the pollution status, is mostly missing in the scientific literature. Therefore, new global systems of biogeographical regions for coastal and shelf areas and for pelagic surface waters have been developed. With a combination of the LITTERBASE database and the biogeographical systems an analysis of the biogeographic footprint of plastic litter in the marine environment is possible.