

Durban beaches awash with toxic 'nurdles'

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25 Oct 2017

"An ecological disaster and an environmental emergency" - that's what conservation and environmental organisations are calling the millions of plastic pellets, known as "nurdles", that have been washing up on KwaZulu-Natal beaches in the past two weeks.



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The spread of the pellets is creating further concern; they have gone as far south as the Eastern Cape and to Richards Bay in the north. Jone Porter, director of education at uShaka Seaworld, said the further they spread, the worse the effect.

It is believed a container of nurdles fell off a ship during KwaZulu-Natal's mega-storm. The issue has been referred to the Department of Environmental Affairs.

"It is not merely a provincial problem. It is of national concern," said Porter. "The nurdles float on the tide. They look like food and are being eaten by birds, fish and turtles, causing digestive obstructions. If these pellets stay in the sea, they will break down into smaller bits and absorb toxins. These will be ingested by more marine creatures."

The public has been asked to go to the nearest beach on Sunday between 7am and 10am to collect as many nurdles as possible.

Source: *The Times*

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