

DEBRIS COLLECTION

Litter: Hook It, Gaff It, Bag It

Ever find yourself shaking your head at the sad sight of a Mylar balloon bobbing forlornly on the blue? A plastic bottle floating at the tideline? A plastic shopping bag on the beach? Seaweed tangled with monofilament? Here's an idea: Pick it up!

More and more boaters are keeping nets, boathooks, and gaffs at the ready, and a bag in the lazarette, to deal with the trash and flotsam they run across. Send the kids along the riverbank or harborside in the dinghy to see how much debris they can collect. When you walk the beach, take a jab-stick and bag some Styrofoam cups.

And there's nothing better to tune up those boathandling and man-overboard-retrieval skills than jibing downwind to catch a drifting balloon or plastic bag. At least once or twice a year, join a local cleanup group for a shore patrol, whether they're conservationists, bird-watchers, school kids, or duck hunters. Or visit www.oceanconservancy.org and click the "Take Action" tab to find out more about the International Coastal Cleanup.

