Impact of Marine Pollution on Seabirds

Source: DTE

A research highlights that **plastic ingestion** **by seabirds not only causes physical harm but also disrupts their hormonal systems,** posing long-term biological risks.

- Seabirds like **albatrosses, petrels, and shearwaters** (members of the order *Procellariiformes*) ingest highest rates of plastic ingestion due to their foraging behavior and unique digestive systems.
- Ingested plastic can cause physical harm (e.g., obstruction, perforation, malnutrition) and release toxic chemicals that affect hormones.
- **Marine Plastic Pollution:** Plastic pollution accounts for **80% of marine waste**, with **8–10 million metric tons entering oceans annually**. By 2050, plastic could outweigh all fish.
    - Currently, 50–75 trillion plastic pieces pollute our oceans, forming vast garbage patches or breaking into microplastic particles.
    - Marine pollution **harms biodiversity, reduces oxygen levels in ocean waters, disrupts deep-sea ecosystems**, contaminates the marine food chain, and negatively impacts human health, and coastal livelihoods.
- **Combating Marine Plastic Pollution:** The **Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML)**, established in 2012, is a multi-stakeholder platform to combat plastic pollution globally.
    - The **UNEP** **Source-to-Sea Pollution Unit** serves as its secretariat, supporting knowledge-sharing and joint action.
    - The **1972 London Convention** and **1978 Protocol to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)** aim to prevent marine pollution from waste dumping and ship discharges.

Read more: Plastic Marine Pollution