



สำนักงานที่ปรึกษาการเกษตรต่างประเทศ
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Office of Agricultural Affairs - Royal Thai Embassy - Washington DC

DOF takes big step forward, recycling marine debris into shirts as part of “Beautiful Sea by Our Hands” campaign



Marine debris is a major global environmental concern that affects both marine and human life. The Department of Fisheries (DOF), an agency responsible for managing fishery resources in Thai waters, has launched the “Garbage Return to Shore, Keep the Sea Clean by Our Hands” campaign. The campaign, which covers 23 coastal provinces, applies the BCG (Bio-Circular-Green) Economic Model through various activities. The activities involve local fishing communities, commercial fishing operators, and all relevant agencies, leading to effective and sustainable solutions to marine debris.

Mr. Buncha Sukkaew, the Director-General of DOF, revealed that DOF places great importance on waste management. It is a national agenda that requires involvement from all sectors. The marine debris issue not only affects the marine environment but also significantly impacts the fishing profession. Integrated cooperation from all sectors is needed to eliminate the plastic waste problems. This involves adopting the concept of not creating marine debris and collecting marine litters to convert it into capital. The approach aims at generating incomes for the community, raising awareness and encouraging participation in environmental conservation. There are also efforts to educate people about the causes of marine debris and proper waste management.

DOF has collaborated with commercial fishing operators to run the “Garbage Return to Shore, Keep the Sea Clean by Our Hands” campaign continuously since 2019. The Port-in Port-out Control Centers (PIPO) at all 30 locations nationwide are the main agencies encouraging fishermen to reduce the use of difficult-to-decompose containers and packaging. They are asked not to dump unused equipment, tools and containers into the sea. The wastes collected and returned to shores by fishermen are recorded and evaluated. DOF registered piers take part in the campaign by designating an area for marine waste gathering and sorting. Currently, there are 4,826 fishing boats registered to participate in the campaign.



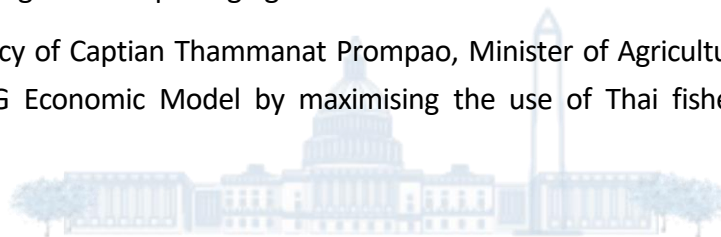
Over the past four years, a total of 408,373 kilograms of plastic waste have been collected from Thai waters, including 317,725 kilograms collected from fishing boats and 90,648 kilograms from the sea. The most common type of waste is fishing net remains, followed by plastic bottles, glass bottles and other trashes. The collected wastes will be either reused and disposed.



Recently, DOF in collaboration with the Ban Laem Fishing Association, commercial fishing operators in Phetchaburi Province and fish processors have initiated the ideas of recycling by melting the debris into fibers. The fibers obtained are mixed with other fibers and woven into a shirt. These shirts are soft, breathable, comfortable to wear, environmentally friendly with reduced carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. One shirt is made of 8.5 plastic bottles collected from the sea. It corresponds to the concept of maximizing circular resource usage, turning waste into high-valued products, reducing plastic waste and deminishing global warming.

This concept is another approach to protecting the environment and promoting the Circular Economy System in line with the notion “Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)”. EPR extends the responsibilities of the producers to cover the entire supply chain from production to post-consumption. The producers must be involved in managing the used packaging.

The campaign aligns with the policy of Captian Thammanat Prompao, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, in promoting the BCG Economic Model by maximising the use of Thai fishery



resources and emphasizing environmental-friendly agriculture. The Plastic Waste Management 2018 – 2030 Roadmap and the Plastic Waste Management 2020 – 2022 action plan will lead the way to collect debris from the sea for disposal, create awareness, induce participation by all parties and eventually turn Thai waters into “clean seas”.

Source: <https://www.climatecenterthailand.co/environment/zero-waste/217>

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