

Mylar Balloon Study

what goes up, may come down in the water

Releasing a Mylar balloon may seem harmless, but these balloons present a serious threat to sea turtles, dolphins and birds. Mylar balloons can stay in the air for more than two weeks while traveling hundreds of miles. Often, these balloons end up in the ocean, where animals confuse them with food. Animals may also become trapped or entangled which may result in drowning or starving to death.



Captain Mark Sampson

For the last 20 years, Captain Mark Sampson, a charter captain out of Ocean City, Maryland, has recorded the location of every Mylar balloon he has come across in the ocean.

Capt. Sampson found an average of 18 Mylar balloons per year, most in May and June. This suggests that balloons released during graduations and weddings may be responsible for a large portion of Mylar balloons in the ocean.

Most balloons were found many miles from shore, with some nearly 45 miles off the coast. At this distance, Mylar balloons could easily be picked up by ocean currents and carried thousands of miles away.

This information is the first of its kind in Maryland as beach cleanups were formerly the only source of information on Mylar balloon pollution.

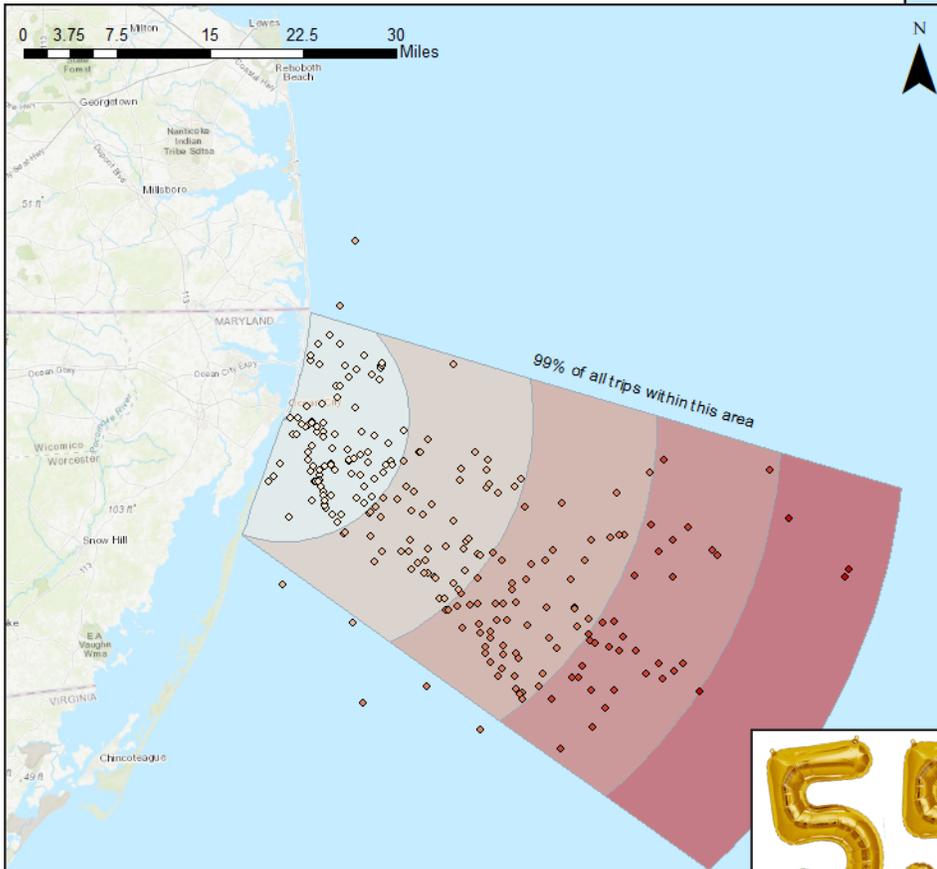
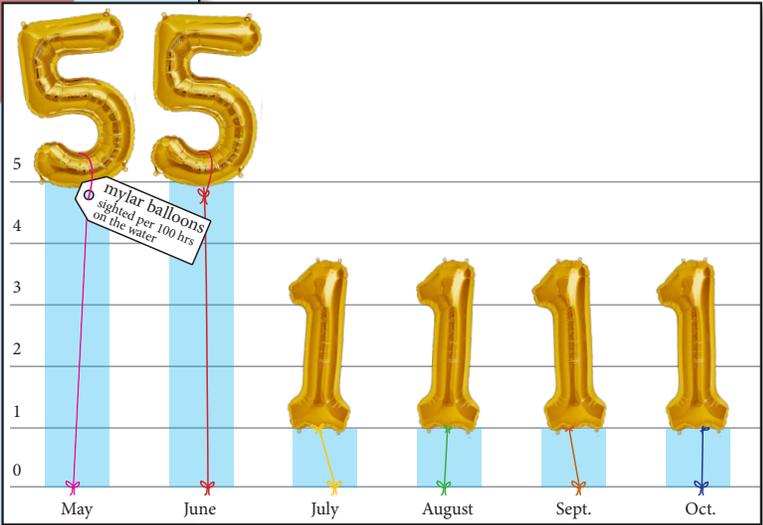


Photo courtesy of Blumes Balloon Roundup

- Never release balloons into the air.
- Choose to celebrate occasions without balloons.
- Pick up any balloons you find.
- Dispose of balloons properly.
- Educate your friends and family about the danger of balloon releases.



Mylar Balloon Sighting	Distance From OC Inlet
◇ < 10 Miles	< 10 Miles
◇ 10 - 20 Miles	10 - 20 Miles
◇ 20 - 30 Miles	20 - 30 Miles
◇ 30 - 40 Miles	30 - 40 Miles
◇ 40 - 50 Miles	40 - 50 Miles