

Edward Smith

Other than various beach litter, particularly styrofoam, we volunteers of the Community Litter Cleanup Program (CLCP) through the Washington State University Extension in Coupeville on Whidbey Island have realized that there is a very harmful source of litter, and that is shotgun wads.

The wads are the result of sportsmen shooting birds or clay pigeons and not gathering the remainder of the ammunition that results in many, as many as a thousand a year, collected by our group which clean beaches on the island every Tuesday.

Most of the wads are translucent and travel through the water looking like squid which the birds and fish digest leading to sickness or death.

The CLCP volunteers have found over 360 wads in one cleanup of the public beach in Oak Harbor and over 780 wads in a coordinated cleanup of Crescent harbor with the Navy.

Non-biodegradable wads are outlawed in Europe. In the United States non-biodegradable wads are less expensive than biodegradable wads, so the sportsmen choose them for obvious reasons.

An idea that has been discussed in our volunteer organization is providing the hunter with coupons, making up the difference in price between non-biodegradable wads and biodegradable wads, but we need funding to accomplish this mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to reach out to the Department of Ecology.