



# Julien Guerrero

33 years old  
Surfrider volunteer  
Non-profit worker  
in agroecology  
Brest, France

“ The obstacle is to go against one's habits, to question one's consumption culture. ”

## Information is key

« When looking at a list of components, whether for toothpaste or shampoo, you are soon facing unpronounceable and obscure words. We have to make a default choice. »

As Julien has found, not only do we lack information but it is also not easy to change behavior.

« It's quite annoying because the culprit is well identified [us humans], even though very few people are purposefully wicked. Nobody wants to release their plastic waste in the natural environment. Very often people do not want to do bad things, but

they are not well informed and will consume in a certain way that causes negative impacts at the end of the chain. »

Giving people information, raising awareness, learning to make a choice as a consumer, decision-maker or industrialist, to become a driver for change: this is what motivated Julien to contact Surfrider Foundation Europe. The NGO put him in contact with other people and advised them to set up a local branch together.

Against all odds, their first beach cleanup in Finistère brought together nearly 80 participants!

BECOME  
**RESPONSEABLE!**  
WITH US

Plastic's fantastic!  
Durable, malleable, cheap,  
**plastic is now found everywhere.**

*We are all part of the solution*

In France, the government **banned single-use plastic bags** (2016 at check out counters, 2017 for others).

NGOs put **pressure on decision-makers and raise public awareness.**

**Consumers are pushing businesses and the industry** to adopt less harmful methods or ingredients.

In 2014, UNEP\* estimated that marine **plastic pollution costs us \$ 13 billion per year**: plastics need to be picked up, treated, and they can even harm tourism activity in a coastal area.



Blown away by the wind, transported by drainpipes, sewers, rivers and watersheds, **80 % of rubbish in the sea was littered on land, and 75 % of the waste found at sea is made of plastic.**

Marine flora and fauna are strongly affected: plastic impacts their diet, can trap animals, or carry a harmful species across the ocean. **94% of North Sea birds have plastic in their stomachs.**

\* UNEP United Nations Environment Program

Result of a one hour beach cleanup in Finistère



## Really a solution?

- Beach cleanups done by hand avoid removing the strandline, which is an important habitat for many species.
- The average concentration of waste on a beach is 2,000 kg per km<sup>2</sup>, compared with 18 kg per km<sup>2</sup> in the "7<sup>th</sup> continent", the North Pacific waste vortex.
- Beach cleanups attract attention and raise citizens' awareness at the local level.
- Participating in a beach cleanup organised by an association ensures that the litter is sorted and counted, improving our grasp of the phenomenon and acting at its source.

