

Don't Let Go!

The MCS campaign for
responsible balloon use



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Cover images: Balloons/CORBIS
Fulmars and balloons/ALTERRA VAN FRANKEER

If you would like to find out more about the responsible use of balloons and the effects of balloon releases on the marine environment, please visit

www.mcsuk.org

You can also contact us at:

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The MCS 'Don't Let Go!' campaign pack has been funded by the Project Aware Foundation (International) and the Crown Estate

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What happens to balloons after they are released?



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Balloons can kill wildlife

Don't
Let
Go!

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responsible balloon use

Protecting our seas, shores
and wildlife - now and for
future generations.



Marine
Conservation
Society

Balloons float up into the air and disappear from your thoughts, but not from the environment.

Beach litter surveys organised by the Marine Conservation Society have shown that the number of balloons and balloon pieces found on UK beaches has tripled in the last 10 years.

- 10% of released balloons don't burst, they float back down to earth where they pose a serious threat to wildlife.
- Dolphins, whales, turtles, seabirds and other animals have all been killed by balloons.
- If swallowed, balloons can block an animal's gut and cause it to starve.
- Animals can become entangled in balloon ribbons and string, restricting their movement and their ability to feed.
- Even biodegradable latex balloons are a danger as they can take several months or even years to break down.



- Turtles are particularly at risk as they can confuse balloons with their jellyfish prey.
- Mass balloon releases have already been banned by several local authorities in the UK, USA and Australia.
- Don't let go!



GRAEME CRESSWELL/BREATHTAKINGWHALES.COM



MCS guidelines for wildlife friendly balloon use

You can enjoy balloons without harming wildlife.

- Don't let go of balloons outdoors!
- Fill balloons with air rather than helium.
- Use balloons made of natural rubber latex rather than mylar (foil) balloons.
- When tying balloons use natural cotton string rather than plastic ribbon.
- Securely tie any balloons that are used outside.
- Always hand tie balloons rather than using plastic valves.
- Sign up to the 'Don't Let Go' petition

www.mcsuk.org

Instead of releasing balloons into the environment, why not try a wildlife friendly alternative?

Prize balloon popping

Air fill your balloons, and hide a few prize tickets inside. Release the balloons indoors and have everyone pop them to find prizes.

Balloon relay - Each member of a team has to run a short distance and sit on a balloon to pop it before running back to tag the next member of the team. The first team to pop all their balloons wins!

Balloon art - Hire a balloon artist or, for a big, bold statement, try a giant air-filled-balloon sculpture.

Visit our website for more ideas.



BALLOONS CAN KILL WILDLIFE