

Press Release



Tracking Trash

by Loree Griffin Burns

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Fact: Oceanographers estimate that between two thousand and ten thousand cargo containers fall into the ocean from ships every year, usually spilling their contents.

Fact: If we stopped making plastic today, it would take thirty to forty years for plastic waste that is already in the ocean to stop washing ashore.

Fact: The Eastern Garbage Patch in the Pacific Ocean is a floating garbage dump the size of the state of Alaska. Cleaning it up with hand-drawn machinery would be like mowing Texas . . . twice.

About the Book

When hundreds of Nike sneakers washed ashore in Seattle, Washington, in 1990, Dr. Curt Ebbesmeyer's career in tracking trash began. His mother, a Seattle resident, figured Curt would be able to determine the origin of the shoes, since he studied ocean movements for a living. The curious landfall perplexed many, but after several months of research, Dr. Ebbesmeyer pinpointed the source from which the sneakers came.

Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion follows three extraordinary scientists — Dr. Ebbesmeyer, Dr. Jim Ingraham, and Captain Charles Moore — as they comb the seas and shores for clues that lend insight into the depths of the ocean. These men work together to gather data — sometimes in the form of plastic bathtub toys or computer monitors — to better understand ocean currents and how they affect life on land as well as at sea. And with careful analysis, this community of scientists, along with their friends and beachcombers, can use the data to help protect the world's oceans.

The **Scientists in the Field series** shows people immersed in the unpredictable and dynamic natural world, making science more accessible, relevant, and exciting to young readers. Far from the research laboratory, these are firsthand adventures in the great outdoors — adventures with a purpose. From climbing into a snake den with thousands of slithering snakes to tracking wolves, swimming with hammerhead sharks, and collecting bugs, these scientists help readers experience the thrill of discovering the unknown.

About the Author

Quite like a piece of jetsam tossed into the sea, *Tracking Trash* came in through the slush to Houghton Mifflin. First-time author **Loree Griffin Burns**, a scientist herself with a doctorate in biochemistry, was attracted to the Scientists in the Field series and the way in which it makes science exciting and accessible to children. She lives in West Boylston, Massachusetts, with her husband and three children. To learn more about Loree and her beachcombing adventures, visit www.loreegriffinburns.com.