

# Hold Onto Your Balloons!

## THE PROBLEM

Most of us have witnessed it. A lone balloon, or perhaps dozens of them at an event, floating aimlessly through the sky, further and further away until they eventually disappear from sight.

Unfortunately, what goes up must come down. Balloons that are released to the skies are notorious for returning to the earth to litter marine and terrestrial environments alike. Whether released intentionally or not, airborne balloons can travel thousands of miles before they burst or deflate and begin their descent. Balloon pollution is a global issue that has no boundaries, harming many animals, both wild and domestic, which mistake these balloons for food or find themselves snared in plastic ribbon, strings and other materials associated with balloons. Similar to other [plastic pollution](#) items, an ingested balloon can block an animal's digestive tract, causing the animal to slowly starve to death. Just as we've passed laws to reduce other plastic pollution items such as straws, single-use bags and foam, we should do the same with balloons.

## THE SOLUTION

The Surfrider Foundation calls on local governments, state legislatures and the federal government to follow the [example](#) of dozens of state and local communities by adopting common sense laws prohibiting the intentional release of all balloons, including those with mylar or labeled as "biodegradable." Such laws should also include lanterns and confetti, which are both made primarily of plastic.

Through our network of grassroots activists and chapters, Surfrider is working on advocating for and implementing balloon ban policies at local and state levels. Since 2016, the Surfrider Foundation has helped to pass 26 balloon release [laws](#) across the country with 17 laws passed in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, one in the Southwest and eight in the Southeast. As of March 2022, Surfrider chapters are engaged in three [active](#) balloon release ban campaigns locally in New Jersey, Florida and California.

**Since 2016, the Surfrider Foundation has helped to pass [26 balloon release laws](#) across the country.**



## HOW TO SUPPORT

**There are many actions you can take to be part of the solution to get rid of balloon pollution! Here are few:**

Join your local [Surfrider chapter or club](#) to fight against plastic pollution.

Educate yourself and others!

There are many balloon alternatives one can use rather than balloons, such as:

- **Planting in Remembrance:** a great gesture to honor and remember a loved one or an important event in a way that can benefit the environment.
- **Floating Flowers:** The act of releasing balloons symbolizes for many the act of letting go. By releasing native flowers into a local stream, lake or ocean instead, we can still ritualize the act of letting go in an environmentally conscious way.
- **Blowing Bubbles:** A fun and engaging way to fill the sky and celebrate a special event.
- There are dozens of ways to celebrate and honor the important moments in our lives without harming the environment. [Click here for more great ideas.](#)

**Surfrider will be publishing a Balloon Policy Toolkit so [check back here](#) to learn more about this issue!**

