

# UK Government announces plans to ban plastic microbeads

September 5 2016, by Sarah Rakowski

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Credit: Fauna & Flora International

Fauna & Flora International applauds plans to put a stop to microplastic pollution from cosmetic products and welcomes Government's commitment to look into other industry sources of this unnecessary pollutant.

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) staff are celebrating today as the UK Government's Environment Secretary formally announces plans to ban the sale and manufacture of cosmetics and personal care products containing plastic microbeads.

The news was published on Defra's (the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs) website this morning, after rumours about a ban started to leak on Friday evening.

According to the official announcement "Government action will create a level playing field for industry, tackle inconsistency and stop new products containing tiny pieces of plastic from being sold in the UK."

Following today's announcement, the Government will be holding a consultation exercise with industry, environmental groups and other relevant parties to establish how and when a ban could be introduced, though it says that the aim is to change legislation by next year.

Responding to the news, FFI's Marine Plastics Projects Manager Daniel Steadman said, "We applaud the Government for taking action to turn off the tap on microplastics. This is one source of marine pollution that is simple to control through a ban, and we are pleased to see the UK showing leadership on this issue."

The consultation will gather evidence on the environmental impacts of microbeads found elsewhere, such as in household and industrial cleaning products, and will also consider what can be done in future to tackle other plastics (such as microfibres found in fabrics) that commonly find their way into the marine environment.

Steadman welcomed plans to consult on wider sources of microplastic pollution, saying that, "Cosmetic and beauty products are just one part of a much bigger problem."

"We will be encouraging the [government](#) to specifically consider raw plastic pellets (so called 'nurdles') within this assessment," he said.

As a world leader on tackling marine microplastic pollution, Fauna &

Flora International looks forward to contributing its expertise during the consultation.

"We have been working on this issue since 2010 and are absolutely delighted that the UK Government agrees it is ultimately a solvable problem," says Dr Abigail Entwistle, Director of Conservation Science at FFI.

"Microplastic pollution is a ubiquitous problem in all of the world's seas and oceans, but a comprehensive ban will put the UK at the top of the leader board on this issue. We are confident that, by consulting with the right experts, the UK Government can set the gold standard for other nations to work towards and ultimately make our blue planet much healthier, both now and for generations to come."

FFI sees this outcome as testament to its successful collaboration with the Environmental Investigation Agency, Marine Conservation Society and Greenpeace UK, and congratulates the Environmental Audit Committee on its role in reviewing this issue.

**More information:** To find products that do not contain these ingredients, see [www.goodscrubguide.org](http://www.goodscrubguide.org)

Provided by Fauna & Flora International

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