



Plastic Pollution

- Humans have produced more plastic in the last 10 years, than in the whole of the last century.
- Almost half of the plastic people use is used just once and then thrown away, but the problem is that there is no “away”.
- According to water filtration company Brita, Americans throw away 35 billion plastic water bottles every year.
- Annually, approximately 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide. More than one million bags are used every minute.
- Plastic accounts for around 10% of the total waste generated.
- Plastic has been found in all of the major oceans. Around 80% of marine litter originates on land. You do not need to be near the ocean for you to have an impact on ocean pollution!
- Marine plastic pollution has impacted at least 267 animal species worldwide. Fish in the North Pacific ingest 12,000 to 24,000 tons of plastic each year.
- The most common trash items found during ocean clean-ups are cigarette butts, food wrappers, plastic bottles and caps, straws, plastic bags, glass bottles, aluminum cans, plastic cups, and plastic plates.
- Plastic inputs are highest in rapidly developing countries, which also have some of the lowest waste collection rates on the planet.
- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, located in the North Pacific Ocean is estimated to be about the size of Texas and contains around 3.2 million tons of trash. Other, smaller garbage patches have been found in other oceans where whirlpools of water, called gyres, trap huge collections of trash in their currents.
- Plastic bottles can take over 450 years to decompose, while plastic grocery bags can take up to 20 years to fully decompose.



HOW LONG 'TIL IT'S GONE?

Estimated decomposition rates of common marine debris items

 AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY



Resources

- www.5gyres.org
- <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>
- www.banthebottle.net
- www.ncsl.org
- <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/>
- <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/explore/reduce/index.htm>
- <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>
- <http://www.oneworlddoneocean.com/>
- <http://www.plasticoceans.net/>
- <http://www.globalocean.org.uk/>
- <http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/>
- <http://www.nrdc.org/oceans/plastic-ocean/>