

Destroying Our Oceans With Trillions Of Pieces Of Plastic

As young scuba divers in the Gulf of Mexico back in 1963, my brother Rex and I enjoyed pristine magic under the surface of beautiful blue ocean waters. Mother Nature dazzled us with her endless display of fish, eels, whales, sharks, turtles, rays and kelp.

Fifty-five years later, human beings dazzle our scuba diving trips with trillions of pieces of plastic floating on and below the surface of all our oceans on this planet. Ten-mile-long drift nets strangle and suffocate sharks, whales, porpoises, turtles and any creature caught in their plastic grasp. Plastic bags resemble jelly fish as they float in plumes across our oceans. Ocean beaches feature washed up plastic trash sometimes knee deep and miles long on once-pristine white sands.

All that plastic kills sea birds by the millions. Avian life thinks a Bic lighter means food, or a bottle cap, or anything floating on the water. Plastic kills countless whales and porpoises. It kills and kills and kills.

Twenty years ago, Oprah Winfrey featured the 60 ton, as big as the size of Texas, 30 to 60 feet deep, floating plastic island, known as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch." [Take a look at how it kills.](#)

Today, because we did nothing as the community of humanity, the garbage patch exceeds 100 million tons of floating plastic.

"When the waste was natural material, we could leave it and not think about it," researcher Jenna Jambeck said. "Even

disposing of it in the land was fine, but plastic has increased 650% in the last 40 years.

Plastic waste discarded in the ocean raises a number of concerns. It damages ecosystems and marine animals, contaminate our food supply, and lead to chemical leaching.”

“Estimates of the time it takes to degrade plastic range from hundreds to thousands of years – and because plastic has only been around for 100 years, there hasn’t been enough time to observe the process,” says Darby Hoover, senior resource specialist at Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group.

Last year, [one study in the journal PLOS](#) estimated that a minimum of 5.25 trillion floating plastic particles weighing **268,940 tons float on the surface or sink to the bottom of our oceans**. That equates to 46,000 pieces of plastic floating on every square mile of our oceans. Latest estimates show that humans toss 3.5 million pieces of plastic into the oceans 24/7.

In other words, marine creatures don’t stand a chance today, tomorrow or forever. They become collateral damage as to humanity’s gross negligence of plastic production.

This estimate included only surface plastics, and not the materials that have sunk.

“A lot of people think of an island of floating garbage, people envision that there are forms of an island you can see on Google Earth – it’s much more diffuse than that,” Hoover said. ” All of our oceans are plastic soups—everywhere you can go.”

Thus, today, if you eat any ocean marine life, you eat plastics! What goes around, comes around, back to you. Think about that when you eat salmon, tuna, squid, swordfish, et al. You’re doing the same thing to yourself as you did to

that salmon or tuna.

Here in America, we grow as the third largest producers of plastics behind China and India.

Other than ten states, NY, VT, MI, CA, OR, WA, MA, ME, Ct, IA, that feature 5 to 10 cent incentive-driven return laws on plastic, metal and glass drink containers—no one in 40 states lifts a finger to initiate financial-incentive laws to return plastics to the stores for recycling or reuse.

Ironically, everyone wants to protect our environment, but only 33 percent of Americans commit to serious recycling. In other words, the majority of Americans could care less.

As a lifelong trash picker-upper, I attest to Americans' trashing their own country. We walked onto this pristine land over 300 years ago, but today, I estimate over 50-80 million personal trash dumps on farmers' lands. Throw in 50 to 100 million junked cars laying across the USA in every state. Toss in billions of bottles, cans and plastic containers! Just look into the wilds for hundreds of thousands of abandoned trailer homes left for decay anywhere and everywhere across America. You've seen them in your travels. You lived with them in your own towns and cities.

But no one lifts a finger to do something about any of it. Ah, the usual excuse: "Oh, all that trash is on private property."

Yeah, well, 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic trashing our oceans cannot be excused as private property. Yet, no country lifts a finger to stop it or change it or remove it.

The challenge: what are you doing in your own community and state to pass incentive-driven recycling laws? What are you doing to put a 25-cent deposit-return price on every piece of aluminum, steel, glass and plastic container sold out of mercantile stores?

Why do you use plastic bags out of the grocery or mercantile stores when you could bring your own cotton bags repeatedly over the year?

Why haven't you initiated container-return laws in your city or state? Why haven't you called your senators and House members to get their butts in gear? What and why are you waiting?

Why must you take action in your neck of the woods? This video shows how your actions or inaction affects the entire world. We either stop this plastic onslaught of our planet, or we will become victims of it:

◇ [Plastic pollution, our planet, our future](#)

◇ [Flushing plastics down their toilets](#)

If these videos don't make you sick, and don't make you cry—I don't know what will move you to action. I am one journalist, one voice, one mind, one scuba diver and one person who cares. I need your help.

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