

# Shocking Ocean Pollution Statistics!

- 100 million marine animals die each year from plastic waste alone.
- 100,000 marine animals die from getting entangled in plastic yearly – this is just the creatures we find!
- 1 in 3 marine mammal species get found entangled in litter, 12-14,000 tons of plastic are ingested by North Pacific fish yearly.
- Our marine pollution and debris are hazardous for creatures in the gyres.
- Loggerhead sea turtles hunt jellyfish, which unfortunately look remarkably like plastic bags.
- The majority of marine life cannot differentiate their food from plastic garbage we've dumped.
- These animals starve to death, clogging their stomachs with plastic so they can't eat real food.
- For example, Albatrosses and other birds mistake plastics for fish eggs, and they sadly feed them to their chicks, which in turn perish from organ failure or starvation.
- Marine plastic pollution is found in 100% of turtles, 59% of whales, and 36% of seals in recent studies.
- The air isn't safe either, more than 90% of all seabirds are found to have plastic pieces in their stomachs.
- Mammals like seals drown in the 705,000 tons of discarded fishing nets – this horrifying phenomenon has been dubbed 'ghost fishing'.
- 500 marine locations are now recorded as dead zones globally, currently the size of the United Kingdom's surface (245,000 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Our coral reefs house some 25% of all marine life known to man. When it comes in contact with marine plastic, the probability of it dying goes from 4%-89%.
- The majority of fish we consume as humans (trout, perch, cisco, etc) would have ingested plastic and microfibers.

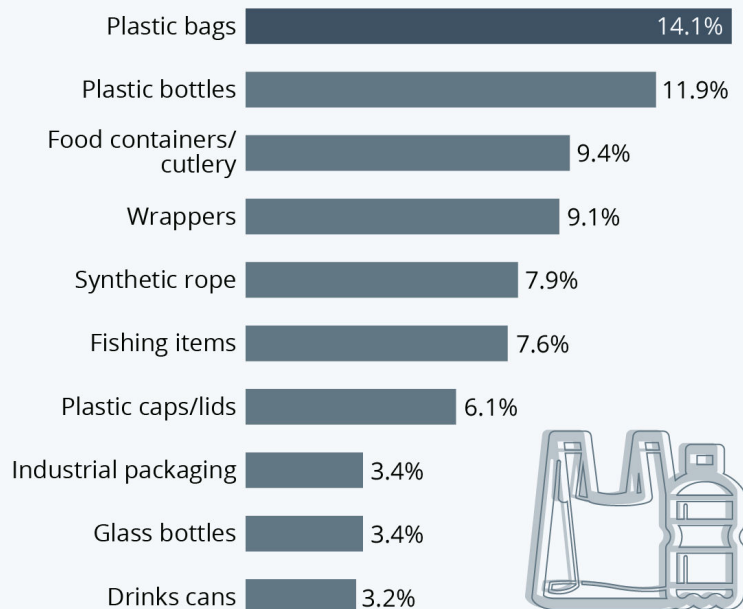
# How does your trash affect marine life?

We find about 100,000 marine animals killed by ocean plastic ingestion or entanglement each year, and this is only the tip of the iceberg. There are likely far more lying at the bottom of the ocean, who, once decomposed, will release the plastic for other animals to encounter. Approximately 1 million sea birds also die from plastic annually, and it remains to be seen what the toll is on humans, who ingest approximately 40 pounds during their lifetime.

All of the above is unsurprising once we understand the sheer quantity of plastic in the ocean. About 8 to 10 million tons make their way into the water every year, and we believe there are over 46,000 pieces of plastic in every square mile of ocean. Every single day, 13,000 to 15,000 pieces of plastic are dumped in – it's unfathomable.

## Plastic Items Dominate Ocean Garbage

The 10 most widespread waste items polluting the world's oceans\*



\* Based on waste items found in seven aquatic ecosystems globally.  
Source: Carmen Morales-Caselles et al. (2021)



Plastic products make up the majority of the trash in the ocean, according to a recent analysis published in the journal Nature Sustainability. With funding from the Spanish Ministry of Science and the BBVA Foundation, it concentrated on recognizable objects larger than 3cm, omitting fragments and microplastics. At 14.1 percent, single-use plastic bags made up the largest portion of trash items found in seven aquatic environments. With 11.9 percent, plastic bottles were the second most popular item, followed by food containers and utensils with 9.4 percent.

Other typical trash materials found in the oceans were noted in the report as plastic caps or lids (6.1 percent), fishing items (7.6 percent), wrappers (9.1 percent), and synthetic rope (7.9 percent). The biggest concentration of rubbish was typically found along shorelines that are close to coasts and seashores; however, discarded fishing gear was particularly concentrated in the open ocean, making up almost half of all waste that has been observed.

The Guardian quoted Carmen Morales-Caselles at the University of Cádiz in Spain who led the research. She stated that "we were not surprised about plastic being 80 percent of the litter, but the high proportion of takeaway items did surprise us, which will not just be McDonald's litter, but water bottles, beverage bottles like Coca-Cola, and cans". She continued, adding that "this information will make it easier for policymakers to actually take action to try to turn off the tap of marine litter flowing into the ocean, rather than just clean it up."

More information can be found:

McCarthy, N. (2021, June 11). Plastic items dominate ocean garbage. Statista Daily Data. <https://www.statista.com/chart/25056/waste-items-polluting-oceans/>

How does trash affect the marine life?

☐ They coexist peacefully

☐ They kill marine life via strangulation

☐ They decorate the corals

☐ They dissolve in seawater.