

# Plastic Pollution Facts

- Every other breath you take comes from the ocean.
  - <http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-news/every-breath-you-take-thank-ocean>
- Every piece of plastic ever made still exists today.
  - <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/7281/every-single-piece-of-plastic-ever-made-still-exists-heres-the-story/>
- Less than 10% of the plastic we use gets recycled.
  - <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>
- The equivalent of one dump truck of plastic enters our ocean every minute. At this rate there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, by weight, in about 30 years from now.
  - <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/>
  - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/04/556132-feature-uns-mission-keep-plastics-out-oceans-and-marine-life>
- Over 80% of plastic pollution in our ocean comes from land-based sources such as littering and poor waste disposal systems. The other 20% comes from fishing and shipping activities including lost or discarded fishing gear.
  - <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/plastic-end-ocean/>
- Microplastics are less than 5mm in size and consist of microbeads from toothpaste and face scrubs, microfibers from clothes, and raw plastic pellets from manufacturing. These are so small that they aren't easily filtered out and are often consumed by fish and other marine animals.
  - <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/microplastics.html>

- Microplastics have been found in the fish we eat, air we breathe, and water we drink.
  - <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/09/19/551261222/guess-whats-showing-up-in-our-shellfish-one-word-plastics>
  - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2017/09/14/table-salt-contains-carcinogenic-plastic-study/#3654d65d75a1>
  - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2468584417300119>
  - <https://www.surfrider.org/coastal-blog/entry/microplastics-found-in-bottled-and-tap-drinking-water>
- All drains and rivers lead to the ocean which means plastic pollution that happens inland will eventually make its way to the ocean.
  - <http://www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/blog/how-does-plastic-end-up-in-the-ocean/blog/60072/>
- Once in the ocean, plastic is carried by surface currents to one of five major gyres. Here, it breaks down by sunlight and waves into microplastics creating a sort of plastic soup. Gyres do not look like a floating island of trash but if you look closely you will find plastic floating on the surface and deep below the waves.
  - <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/ocean-gyre/>
- Although we tend to think that plastic floats, once small enough it can sink deep under the water and has even been found on the deep-sea floor.
  - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4448771/>
- Plastic harms marine life. Turtles often mistake plastic bags as jellyfish and eat them. Lost nets and other plastic items can trap whales, seals, dolphins, and many other animals.
  - <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/marine-animals-are-dying-because-of-our-plastic-trash/>

- Think of plastic like a sponge for toxins in the water. Anything from heavy metals to dangerous chemicals that are usually too dilute in the ocean will latch themselves onto pieces of plastic. When animals eat this plastic, they're also eating these chemicals. Then, as they move up the food chain, these chemicals become more highly concentrated until they're at dangerous levels.
  - <https://phys.org/news/2013-01-plastics-chemicals-absorb-pose-threat.html>
- We still have a lot to learn about plastic pollution in the ocean and the affect it has on people, but one thing is clear - we need to decrease our dependency on plastic and we need to do it now.