

Plastic Pollution hits Pacific Ocean

Reported by Jeremy Houghton

Jeremy Houghton, is an IT software consultant and business analyst who developed his interest in plastic pollution from an idea to organise local collections of recyclable material which his council did not collect. He posted on a local forum and received a link to another forum referencing Captain Charles Moore's crucial work in this field.

We all know of ozone layer damage, CO₂, greenhouse gas - now add **plastics**. Ten years ago Charles Moore sailing his boat, *Algalita*, in the Pacific Ocean, found the '*Eastern Garbage Patch*', a huge area of the Pacific Ocean where, due to sea currents, debris is trapped in currents from far and wide. For the past decade, Captain Moore has been collecting sea and debris samples floating in the Eastern Garbage Patch.



Plastic facts

Plastic does *not* biodegrade, we cannot bury it and barely 5% of plastic glut produced every second is recycled.

- Recycling plastic generates highly dangerous, toxic, fumes - fatal if inhaled.
- Plastic buried in landfill 40 years ago, would be nearly intact if dug up today
- Plastic contamination exists in high levels in sea water collected for analysis.

Sea currents break plastic down in to small toxic bobbles called 'nurdles'. Post mortems on dead fish and sea birds reveal high levels of plastic contamination - a dissected bird had over 1600 pieces of plastic in its gut. An American blood study sample returned 100% plastic toxin contamination in humans.

Plastic is in nearly everything. We need to ask questions about plastic contamination. The extent of this problem can be seen in kitchen cupboards, bathroom cabinets or garage -bottles, vessels and containers are plastic or have it in their manufacture.

The *Plastic Invasion* in every day life is extensive. Limited studies by respected bodies show plastic - our most successful invention - may be turning against us. Unless we act now to find solutions to this threat, we may find unpalatable answers.

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Also reported by: Seattle Times; Los Angeles Times; CBS News; ACS-LA; Ecology Center; United States

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