
The Growing Plastic Monster

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The bright California sun lit up the summer sky with vibrant rays of warmth. The water temperature is marvelous, as there is no need for the usual wetsuit that you use during the winter months because no matter how cold it is, you must always go surfing. You smell the salty ocean air as you lay atop your worn surfboard, and take in the gorgeous blue hue of the water. Just as you think things couldn't get any better, you see a few sea lions lounging on some rocks. But wait, they don't seem too happy! As you take a closer look, you see that they are entangled in pieces of plastic pollution.



As a regular beach goer, you must see your fair share of plastic pollution. And your immediate response might be to just turn your head and look away, but our consumption and poor disposal activities continue, and people like you, the people who treasure

than most, need to become more educated about the effects of plastic pollution. And this article is going to not only tell you exactly *why* plastic pollution is so detrimental to our coastal regions and animals, but it will also tell you *what* you can do to prevent the plastic monster from growing.

Plastic is deadly

After a long day of riding your surfboard down many strong, powerful waves, you might stop by your usual beach town food joint, order your favorite meal or drink. Have you ever thought about what material your food that you get to-go comes in? Do you dispose of it properly? If you are anything like most Americans, you will most likely throw your empty containers in the trash or even on the ground.

Stop! Hault! Do not continue these bad practices! Did you know that these plastics almost always end up in the ocean? According to EcoWatch, the average American throws away 185 lbs of plastic each year! And if that isn't shocking enough, the amount of plastic produced in the last ten years is more than what has been produced in the last *century*. So what can be done about these horrifying statistics? Well the

cleanup and prevention efforts start with YOU!

Polyethylene, huh?

What is polyethylene? It happens to be what all plastic is composed of and it does not biodegrade. Instead, it breaks up into tiny microscopic pieces that can't be seen with the naked eye. So while you are laying on your surfboard enjoying the nice summer day, just think about how you are not only swimming in pure H₂O, but instead you are swimming within a soup of microplastic. These tiny plastic pieces are what make up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, that spans over hundreds of miles off of the California coast. This plastic gets consumed by tiny marine organisms, which gives them a false sense of fullness. There have been many instances where the stomachs of deceased coastal animals are completely filled with plastic, which prevents them from consuming nutrient-rich foods.



the ocean more

What Should I Do?

So now that you are a bit more informed about how your precious oceans are affected by this plastic pollution, here are a few ways you can prevent and/or reduce it:

~You Don't Need That!

Starting right now, cut single-use plastics out of your life! When you go to the grocery store, bring your own bag! If you get a smoothie after a long day of chasing waves, bring your own reusable cup! And if you absolutely need to use single-use plastics, make sure you dispose of them correctly!

~Oldie but Goodie, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!

Now that you have *reduced* your plastic use, and you are using *reusable* containers, now it is time to *recycle*! Push for more recycling bins near the beach and push for more rigorous efforts at home. If your family gets confused on what can and can't be recycled, print out a easy to follow list!

Did you know, according to the Recycling Guide, recycling one soda can would save enough energy to power your TV for three hours? And recycling one glass bottle could power your laptop computer for almost half an hour? You could power a 60-watt light bulb for three hours just by recycling one plastic bottle!



~Clean Up Your Act, as Well as the Beach!

It's time to put those surfing buddies to work! Since you already spend most of your days at the beach, why not participate in a beach clean up before you hit the waves? Places all along the coast of California host beach clean ups regularly, whether it be weekly or monthly! So don't be afraid to get down and dirty, grab a couple of your surfing buddies and get to work! Who knows, it might make you feel good knowing you are helping your community, the beach, the water, and the marine animals!

~Support Local Legislation!

Many communities here in California are giving the boot towards plastics! Places like San Francisco and Santa Barbara have already banned plastic bags, and your hometown could be next! There are also polystyrene foam bans as well as bottle recycling bills that are in the works! Find some community organizations near you and support the cause!

~Plant-based Paradise!

There has been recent creations of plant-based plastic products that are either biodegradable and/or compostable. Although these products are not as environmentally friendly as reusable plastics, these are better alternatives to the plastic products we see in restaurants today. If you ever feel inclined to educate your community with a beach tent and tri-fold boards, maybe you and your surfing pals can serve up some homemade refreshments in bioplastic cups!

”One million sea birds and 100,000 marine mammals are killed from plastic pollution in our oceans every year”

-Lynn Hasselberger, EcoWatch

There are endless things you can do to improve the water quality as well as the health of marine animals. Since you spend so much time in the water that your friends start to call you a mermaid/merman, maybe now is a good time to get involved and be proactive. I'm sure the friends that you go surfing with on the daily will be more than eager to help save the beautiful ocean, because an ocean free from pollution is the type of ocean I want to ride waves in!

Recycling YES!

Please note that ONLY items listed on this poster can be thrown into the GREEN lidded bin. Cardboard boxes must be neatly stacked next to the bin.

<p>Plastic</p>	<p>Paper</p>	<p>Glass</p>
<p>Metal</p>	<p>METALWARRIOR</p>	

For more information please contact Malcolm Smith on 021 380 3000 or 082 934 0793

Here is a list of different materials that are recyclable! Just in case you are confused and some need guidance.

