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[Pollution](#)

Film-maker to swim against tide of filth

By [Kathy Marks](#)

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An Australian film-maker is training to swim from Japan to California, a trip that will take him through the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a huge floating rubbish dump believed to cover an area of ocean equivalent to Texas or Queensland.

Richard Pain's plan is to swim inside a giant plastic bottle, made up of thousands of small water bottles, in order to highlight the devastating marine pollution and raise money for research into the North Pacific Gyre, as the garbage patch is also known.

The "plastic soup", held in place by four competing clockwise currents, consists of garbage thrown off ships or blown off land bordering the northern Pacific.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, it causes the deaths of more than a million seabirds every year, as well as more than 100,000 mammals including whales, dolphins, turtles and seals.

No one has ever swum across the Pacific, and Pain said he realised that attempting the 9000km trip was "completely mad".

But he hopes to "combat green fatigue", he said.

"If I can do something this crazy, everybody else can do something. Whether it's recycle, reuse, rethink, stop using single-use plastics ... just change their behaviour in some simple way."

Pain – who is also making a documentary about his attempt – plans to embark on his record-breaking swim in 2011. The giant plastic bottle will act as a shark cage, while symbolising the cause to which he wants to draw attention.

He hopes to cover 40km a day, swimming for 10 hours, five days a week, which would enable him to complete the trip in 45 weeks.

The garbage patch, estimated to be about 6m deep, is "choked" with plastic items that include kayaks, soccer balls, laundry baskets, Lego blocks, carrier bags, syringes, cigarette lighters and toothbrushes.

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