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## Messenger in bottle plans protest in plastic Pacific

By Barry Copping  
Posted 16 December 2009 1:14 pm GMT



Salps are marine invertebrates alleged to absorb toxins from plastic waste and transmit them to the food chain

45-year old Sydney citizen Richard Pain is hoping to draw attention to the problems of global warming and plastic pollution by swimming 9000km between Japan and the US in a "giant plastic bottle."

"My plan is to build a giant recycled plastic water bottle out of thousands of smaller recycled plastic water bottles, and then use that as an enclosure or

shark cage to swim from Japan to America, through what is called the North Pacific Gyre or Great Pacific Garbage Patch," said Pain.

"It's an area, and estimates vary, at least the size of Texas, full of plastic [litter]... down to about a depth of six metres, so it's an environmental catastrophe.

"Basically there are four currents in that area of the Pacific that circulate in a clockwise direction and they aggregate all this plastic into this central becalmed area called the gyre."

Mr Pain says he is undertaking the journey as a "call to arms" to combat "green fatigue" and raise the profile of a cause presently being ignored by governments around the world.

"Obviously the sea birds and mammals are eating this stuff and it's killing them. Also, plastic doesn't biodegrade, it only photodegrades.




"Those plastics absorb toxins, persistent organic pollutants and PCPs, which we know are contributors to cancer and a whole range of health issues. So they are concentrated in this plastic, which is then eaten or absorbed by salps and jellyfish, and it then moves into the food chain."

Mr Pain hopes to complete the swim in just over six months: "I'm planning to swim five days a week for eight to 10 hours a day. My goal would be 40 kilometres a day."

He plans to leave in 2011, and says has his work cut out for him to prepare for the journey.

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