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s now available [CLICK HERE.....](#) "The Sixth Extinction", a seminal work on the importance of shark conservation by Forum Staff Member Erik Bru

Sea Shepherd Forum > SEA SHEPHERD DISCUSSION FORUM > Sea Shepherd News
Humans drowning world's oceans in plastic

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Thread Tools Display Modes

Humans drowning world's oceans in plastic #1
08-12-2009, 10:20:PM

AnimuX
Verified Members Group
Join Date: Aug 2009
Posts: 1,643

Humans drowning world's oceans in plastic

<http://www.poconorecord.com/apps/psc...WS04/912080315>

Quote:

Walking along El Salvador's palm-treed Pacific beaches last summer, I picked my way through mounds of mostly-plastic debris washed ashore by the waves. Along some stretches, the endangered sea turtles that nest there must dig through two feet of plastic to reach the sand.

The world's oceans are awash in plastic junk. With some 46,000 pieces of plastic afloat on each square mile of the sea, every creature in the marine food web is consuming degraded, nearly indestructible, bite-sized "mermaid's tears."

Plastic debris kills some 100,000 whales, dolphins and other marine mammals and two million birds each year, says the Ocean Conservancy. Untold numbers of sea turtles choke on floating plastic bags they mistake for jellyfish, a favorite food.

But plastics also threaten human health: the ubiquitous presence of these petroleum-based polymers has altered our body chemistry. Most of us carry plastic chemicals in our tissues. Our children often carry higher concentrations.

Many of these substances mimic or disrupt normal hormone function. Researchers have found altered genital development in baby boys whose mothers were exposed to phthalates during pregnancy. These plasticizers are used in food packaging, flooring and other products. Three-quarters of American infants carry measurable levels.

Bisphenol-A (BPA), a chemical used in clear bottles and canned food linings, has been linked to type 2 diabetes, immune system disorders, abnormal penile development, and behavioral problems in toddlers. Ninety-three percent of people tested by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control had BPA in their urine.

Some endocrine disruptors, like BPA, have extremely low-dose effects, adversely altering hormone function at exposures nearly 1,000 times below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recommended limits. But a decade's lobbying by the American Chemistry Council against "negative" research has delayed government action regulating BPA.

Meanwhile, we are exposed to plastics everywhere. Next year, 300 million tons of plastic will be manufactured worldwide, weighing more than 800 Empire State Buildings. Since the millennium, we have produced nearly as much plastic as in the prior half-century.

One-third of all plastics go into packaging — ripped open and tossed, with bags and beverage bottles being the next most pervasive items. Worldwide, over one billion plastic bags are handed to consumers daily. In the U.S., eight billion pounds of bags are trashed each year, costing retailers and consumers \$4 billion. Petroleum used to make plastic bottles alone could fuel one million cars for a year.

Overall, eight percent of the world's oil goes to manufacturing plastics — and just five percent are recycled. Most are entombed in landfills where they'll persist for centuries, often leaching toxic chemicals

into groundwater. Less than 0.2 percent of today's plastics are biodegradable and there are few facilities to compost "bioplastics" made from corn or other food crops. Enormous quantities are also dumped into the ocean. These and other impacts are detailed in "Plastics, the environment and human health," a recent Royal Society report.

There are solutions. Simple ones. Australia, Ireland, Italy, Taiwan and South Africa are leading an international movement to discourage or ban plastic bags. Since 2002 when Ireland introduced a 15-cent "PlasTax," plastic bag use has dropped 90 percent and tax revenues have funded recycling programs. The head of the U.N. Environment Programme has called for a global ban on thin plastic bags.

But in the United States, there's little progress. Powerful industry lobbies resist plastics regulation.

Chemicals that threaten health or don't quickly degrade into harmless compounds must be identified, controlled or outlawed. Congress has endangered us all by exempting 60,000 of 80,000 chemicals currently in use from testing under the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act. Just 200 have been tested; all but five received EPA permits.

We also need mandatory plastic ingredient labeling to identify environmentally-friendly, healthy products. And we need an international plastics pollution treaty to clean up oceans and protect wildlife.

Individually we can all make a difference. Wallace J. Nichols, a marine biologist and science advisor to the Plastic Pollution Coalition, challenges us to examine our weekly "plastic footprint."

It's easy to reduce that footprint, he says. Say no to Styrofoam, single-use plastic bottles, bags, straws, to-go containers and razors. Shop with a reusable bag. Carry your own stainless steel water bottle and coffee mug. Buy in bulk and choose products with minimal or recycled packaging. Reuse glass and stainless steel containers. Recycle the rest.

Pass on toys, baby items, electronics, and more through Freecycle or Goodwill. Buy less plastic: Choose durable products and maintain them.

Among young adults, " 'plastic' is used as an epithet for what is phony, morally hollow, or environmentally hurtful," writes AdWeek. To change that perception, SPI (a plastics trade group) has launched a \$10 million, four-year social-media blitz on Facebook and Twitter aimed at Generation Y.

But here, I stand with the young: I don't want to live in a plastic world.

Offline

Quote

16-01-2010, 12:29:PM

2

Sharkfin

Shore Crew



Join Date: Dec 2009
Location: Western Australia
Posts: 746

Offline

Quote

<http://saveourshores.blogspot.com/20...s-animals.html>

Sea otter struggles to free her pup from a plastic bag. Distressing. 😞

Conservation in Action

16-01-2010, 12:31:PM

3

Erik Brush

Forum Moderator



Join Date: Jan 2009
Location: Sarasota Florida USA
Posts: 3,157

Offline

Very very disturbing!



The greatest of storms often announce themselves with but a gentle breeze!" The time for action is now!

Sharks and Cetaceans need us! And without them, **we ALL die!**

Online!

Quote

16-01-2010, 01:00:PM

#4

symbolique
Senior Member



Join Date: Jan 2010
Location: Wellington, New Zealand
Posts: 161

Online!

Quote

I believe there is a man who is to swim across the Atlantic soon to highlight the plastic bottle waste there (which he says is incredible) and he is doing it in a plastic shell of some kind I think. I heard it on the radio not long ago but for the life of me cannot remember his name.

16-01-2010, 01:44:PM

#5

SSCS Rules
Senior Member

Join Date: Jul 2009
Posts: 251

Offline

Quote

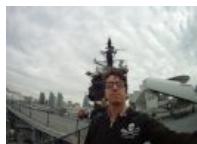
I hate plastic. I really do.

Film-maker to swim against tide of filth

17-01-2010, 05:31:AM

#6

rexray
Shore Crew



Join Date: Jul 2009
Location: Seattle, WA
Posts: 47

Film-maker to swim against tide of filth

Symbolique, you're thinking of Richard Pain:

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/movies/new...ectid=10616902>

Quote:

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.

"We all share this planet. If you can't live here sustainably, then we kindly ask you to leave."

Online!

Quote

17-01-2010, 07:53:AM

#7

PowerToSeaSh

Senior Member



Join Date: Oct 2009
Location: California, USA
Posts: 103

Online!

The Nisshin Maru would make an excellent plastic clean-up vessel. She could haul the trash and plastic and discarded nets that plague the Pacific up her slipway. Come on, Japan, get progressive! Retire the whaling fleet and do something eco-friendly!

Intercept * Intercede * Intervene - For Whales & Seals

Quote

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Sea Shepherd News

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-- Black Teal

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a vBskinworks Design

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