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## Australian Filmmaker to Swim Across the Great Pacific Garbage Patch

By Julie Knapp on December 30, 2009 5:56 PM



The [Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#), a giant mess of plastic junk in the middle of the Pacific Ocean nearing the size of the Northern Territory, has gotten a lot of attention this year from environmentalists to Oprah. Now, Australian filmmaker Richard Pain wants to show people what it looks like firsthand. He plans to swim 9,000 kilometers across the Pacific starting in Japan and ending in the US. In the middle he'll kick his way through the garbage disaster that marine life lives in every day.

The swim, which may take as long as 45 weeks, is obviously ambitious and no one has ever done it. The 45-year-old realizes it's a completely mad project to take on, but as the son of an Olympic bronze medalist, he thinks he has the drive needed.

Pain won't be out there with just a pair of goggles though. He plans to create a six meter long bottle from used water bottles to swim in. It'll add to his message because plastic water bottles are a lot of what's floating around in the Garbage Patch. Plus, it'll keep him safe from sharks.

"But I'm aware there is a lot of green fatigue in the broader population. This is a way to try and raise awareness by doing something more compelling. It's like trying to do an environmental version of *Super Size Me*," Pain told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "I want to create that iconic media image that everybody picks up and says, 'Oh my God, there's a man in the middle of the ocean in a gigantic water bottle,'" he said.

Beyond awareness for the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, Pain hopes to raise \$1 million with his big swim to help research of the mess in the North Pacific Gyre. First up, 18 months of training.

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