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Filmmaker to swim across Pacific & Garbage Patch, floating mass of plastic junk size of North America, 10-meters deep

By [WcP.Watchful.Eye](#) - Posted on [05 January 2010](#)



(quote)

The floating mass of plastic junk – almost the size of the Northern Territory – in the Pacific is an environmental catastrophe: "...the nature of the problem is so immense and the fact it doesn't fall under the jurisdiction of any particular country means as a cause it's kind of like the runt of the litter, something that no particular country wants to take responsibility for." According to the United Nations Environment Program, 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.



RANDOM IMAGE



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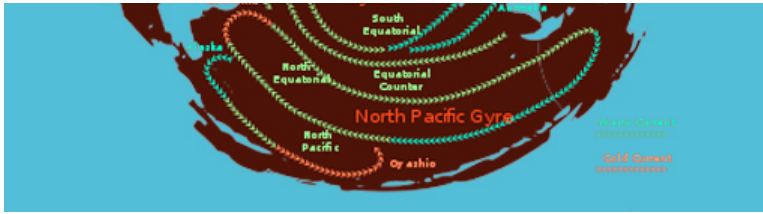
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Mr. Richard Pain has been obsessed for years with the massive garbage patch that is trapped by currents in the North Pacific. "You look down into it and it's nightmarish," he said. "All these birds are eating it and dying, and now it's entering the food chain." Mr Pain, a keen ocean swimmer and environmentalist, said he was unfazed by the fact no one had ever managed to swim across the Pacific. Mr. Pain is planning to swim inside a six-meter-long bottle made from thousands of used water bottles, which will act as a shark cage and a reminder of the plastic waste that is threatening the Pacific Ocean.

"Don't Go Near the Water" - The Beach Boys

Don't go near the water
 Don't you think it's sad
 What's happened to the water
 Our water's going bad

Oceans, rivers, lakes and streams
 Have all been touched by man
 The poison floating out to sea
 Now threatens life on land

Don't go near the water
 Ain't it sad
 What's happened to the water
 It's going bad

When I walk along the beach, I will find a plastic bottle or bag floating to shore. I think to myself, "What amazing fleshbag dumped this into water?". It never occurred to me that certain ocean currents have all this plastic trash gathering in areas of the Pacific Ocean. Some of the trash is found floating in an area of water called the North Pacific Gyre. The currents can hold all this garbage for years!



Film-maker to swim against tide of filth: through the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a huge floating rubbish dump, made up of thousands of small water bottles, in order to highlight the devastating marine pollution

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. 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, 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 Program, 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.

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There is nothing more frightful than ignorance in action.
 — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (German Poet, Philosopher... 1749-1832)

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[...to swim across the Pacific Ocean](#)

Mr. Pain said his journey would take him through what is known as the North Pacific Gyre or the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Because of four competing ocean currents which operate in a clockwise direction, the garbage thrown off ships and blown off land has accumulated in a becalmed area in the centre, posing risks to birds and marine life.



[...filmmaker Richard Pain to swim 9000 kilometers across the Pacific Ocean with his fiancée, Natasha, pregnant with their first child, on board](#)

As if swimming 9000 kilometers from Japan to the US is not enough of a challenge, Richard Pain is also planning to plough through the middle of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a floating mass of plastic junk almost the size of the Northern Territory. "I realize it's completely mad," said the filmmaker, 45, who is selling his Randwick home to raise some of the money needed for the project. "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."

Mr. Pain, a keen ocean swimmer and environmentalist, said he was unfazed by the fact no one had ever managed to swim across the Pacific. He said he had inherited his athletic build and determination from his father, a bronze medal-winning rower at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games. Mr Pain is planning to swim inside a six-meter-long bottle made from thousands of used water bottles, which will act as a shark cage and a reminder of the plastic waste that is threatening the Pacific Ocean.

The bottle will be towed by a boat with his fiancée, Natasha, pregnant with their first child, on board. "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. He is also making a documentary about the attempt. Mr. Pain has been obsessed for years with the massive garbage patch that is trapped by currents in the North Pacific. "You look down into it and it's nightmarish," he said. "All these birds are eating it and dying, and now it's entering the food chain." He is training daily but expects it will be up to 18 months before he is strong enough to set off on his record-breaking attempt, which will take up to 45 weeks. It will be critical for him to ride the Kuroshio current to have any hope of completing the task.



[Sea Monster'](#)

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As well as increasing awareness about pollution, Mr. Pain wants to raise \$1 million for research into the North Pacific Gyre, the body of water filling with plastic rubbish. "The ideal would be for me to walk in the water in Japan, the land of plastic, start swimming and emerge months later on Santa Monica Beach with Richard Branson handing me a check and looking at his watch and saying, 'You made it with five minutes to spare.'"

Swirling Mass of Ocean Trash Grows Bigger Than The U.S.

If the Great Pacific Garbage Patch gets any bigger, we may have to colonize it--that is, if it doesn't invade us first. This swirling mass of plastic debris was a Texas-sized vortex when I first wrote about it in November. Now, this mass of roughly 100 million tons of garbage has overtaken an "area that is maybe twice the size" of the continental United States, as one researcher who's studying the vortex told the Independent.

Oceanographer Curtis Ebbesmeyer, a "flotsam" expert, has been trailing the trash vortex for fifteen years and describes it as "a big animal without a leash: when that animal comes close to land, as it does at the Hawaiian archipelago, the results are dramatic. The garbage patch barfs, and you get a beach covered with this confetti of plastic."

The patch of garbage, which has actually expanded into two connecting areas known as the Western and Eastern Pacific Garbage Patches, was first discovered in 1997 by Charles Moore, an American oceanographer who was "taking a short cut home from a Los Angeles to Hawaii yacht race."

As Moore navigated through the rarely traveled North Pacific gyre, "a vortex where the ocean circulates slowly because of little wind and extreme high pressure systems," he became perplexed that there, thousands of miles from shore, was an endless stream of debris: "Every time I came on deck, there was trash floating by. How could we have fouled such a huge area? How could this go on for a week?"



The spectacle both galled and galvanized Moore. Heir to an oil industry fortune, he sold his business interests and became an environmental activist, founding the Algalita Marine Research Foundation.

Before the advent of modern plastics, the garbage we dumped in the ocean eventually degraded, but now, "every little piece of plastic manufactured in the past 50 years that made it into the ocean is still out there somewhere," as Tony Andrad, a chemist with the Research Triangle Institute, told the Independent.

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The UN Environment Programme estimates that in 2006, every square mile of ocean contained 46,000 pieces of floating plastic. This slowly revolving mass of rubbish kills "more than a million seabirds every year, as well as more than 100,000 marine mammals," according to the UN Environment Programme.

The plastic poses a health hazard to humans, too, because it acts as a carrier for the chemicals and pesticides that foul the ocean and find their way in to our food chain. Moore warns that this toxic "plastic stew" will double in size over the next decade unless consumers cut back on their use of disposable plastics.

An Australian filmmaker plans to swim across the Pacific Ocean from Japan to the United States in a giant plastic bottle, ploughing through a huge floating garbage dump to highlight marine pollution.

Richard Pain said he realized that swimming 9,000 kilometers (5,500 miles) from Japan to California was "completely mad" but said he hoped it inspired others to think more about the environment. "If I can do something this crazy, everybody else can do something," he told AFP.



"Whether it's recycle, reuse, rethink, stop using single use plastics... just change their behaviour in some simple way." Pain, 45, plans to swim in a giant recycled plastic water bottle made out of

thousands of smaller plastic water bottles. The structure, which he said is under design, is intended to protect him from the hazards of the ocean. "All the small bottles will be in the shape of one big bottle," he said.

...an environmental catastrophe: "And on an environmental level the nature of the problem is so immense and the fact it doesn't fall under the jurisdiction of any particular country means as a cause it's kind of like the runt of the litter, something that no particular country wants to take responsibility for.

A Sydney man is hoping to draw attention to the problems of global warming and plastic pollution by swimming between Japan and the US in a giant plastic bottle. Richard Pain's swim will take him through what is known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, an area of rubbish the size of Queensland floating in the ocean.

"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 then swim from Japan to America, through what is called the North Pacific Gyre or Great Pacific Garbage Patch," he said. "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 in to this central becalmed area called the gyre." Mr Pain says he is undertaking the journey to combat 'green fatigue' and raise the profile of a cause presently being ignored by governments around the world. "I think it's time for everyone to do something, basically my view is if I can do something this crazy everyone else can do something," he said.

"It's a call to arms... an attempt to combat green fatigue. "And on an environmental level the nature of the problem is so immense and the fact it doesn't fall under the jurisdiction of any particular country means as a cause it's kind of like the runt of the litter, something that no particular country wants to take responsibility for.

"So that sounds like my kind of cause."

The Patch is around 2200 kilometers long and 800 kilometers wide, depth to 10 meters.

(unquote)

Photos courtesy of [yudu A Clean Life](#), [Wikipedia](#), [TreeHugger](#), [usoceangov](#) / Flickr, [News from the Neumann](#), [its a man made world](#), and [Alex Hofford](#) / Greenpeace

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