



# Plastic Soup Sea

*The soup of the ocean, he'd swallowed it up*

Plastic is cheap to make and is strong and flexible making it incredibly useful for many different things. However, that also means it never really breaks down. We produce over 320 million tonnes of plastic every year (2015) and it is estimated that over 50% of that is on single-use products (such as plastic bags, straws and cups).



The UK throws away 2.5 billion disposable cups a year with less than 1% recycled.



Annually approximately 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide with more than one million used every minute, however the average plastic bag has a 'working life' of just 15 mins.



A plastic bottle can last for 450 years in the ocean but less than half of the 35 million plastic bottles used in the UK every day are recycled.

More than 8 million tonnes of plastic are dumped into the oceans every year. That's one rubbish truck of plastic every minute

Scientists even found 38 billion fragments of plastic on the uninhabited Henderson Island in the South Pacific.

Every piece of plastic we have ever produced is still with us in some form!

These plastics break down into tiny pieces called microplastics, and there may now be around 5.25 trillion pieces in the ocean, weighing up to 269,000 tonnes which is the same as 1345 adult blue whales and 500 times the number of stars in our galaxy!

*A turtle in trouble, a gull in distress*  
*A tightening collar, a shopping bag mess*

Over **700 species** of marine animals have been reported to have eaten or become entangled in plastic – and scientists think that the amount of plastic in the ocean may **triple** by 2050!



Sea turtles eat plastic bags mistaking them for jellyfish, and slowly starve.



Seals and sea lions can become entangled in abandoned fishing gear. Over 200 different species were recorded in US waters suffering from entanglement in 2014.



Sea birds, such as seagulls and albatross confuse plastic debris for food and feed it to their chicks. In 2015, scientists estimated that 90% of seabirds are likely to have plastic in their tummies.



Fish, from the smallest to the largest swallow the tiny microplastics that attract harmful toxins.

When these fish are eaten by bigger fish and mammals, the toxins build up and damage their health.



Microplastics have even been found in tiny shrimp who live at the bottom of the Marianna Trench that have never even seen daylight!