



Credit: Shutterstock

PLASTICS HAVE A PROFOUND DESIGN FLAW: THEY ARE MADE TO LAST FOREVER BUT ARE OFTEN ONLY USED FOR A FEW MOMENTS.

PLASTIC IS A GROWING THREAT TO OUR FUTURE

The oceans face a massive and growing threat from something we encounter every day: plastics. An estimated 33 billion pounds of plastic enter the marine environment every year — that’s roughly the equivalent of dumping two garbage trucks full of plastic into the oceans every minute.

Maybe you have seen the viral video of the plastic straw being painfully pulled out of a sea turtle’s nose. Maybe you have read recent reports of whales washing up dead with dozens of plastic bags in their stomachs. Maybe you have seen the photos of dead seabirds with their bodies stuffed with plastic debris. Or maybe your recent beach visit was spoiled by plastic waste at the high-tide line.

Plastic pollution has been found floating on the surface of the sea, washing up on the world’s most remote coastlines, melting out of Arctic sea ice, and sitting at the

deepest point of the ocean floor. It is everywhere.

As plastics continue to flood into our oceans, the list of marine species affected by plastic pollution expands. It’s impacting everything from zooplankton and fish to sea turtles, marine mammals, and seabirds. A 2020 Oceana report revealed evidence of nearly 1,800 marine mammals and sea turtles swallowing or become entangled in plastic in U.S. waters between 2009 and early 2020 — of those animals, 88% were from species listed as endangered or threatened with extinction under the Endangered Species Act.

To learn more, visit usa.oceana.org/plastics

OCEANA Protecting the World’s Oceans

MADE TO LAST FOREVER, YET USED ONLY ONCE

Plastic lasts for centuries. Once it enters the ocean, it breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces that act as magnets for harmful chemical pollutants and are swallowed by marine animals.

Humans are also eating, drinking, and breathing microplastics. Microplastics have been found in everything from produce and salt to meat, seafood, honey, and beer. Scientists are still studying how we might be affected by the plastics that are making their way into our food, water, and air.

When your bathtub is overflowing, you don't run for a mop before you turn off the faucet. Recycling is the mop. We need to first turn off the faucet.

RECYCLING ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

One of the most popular solutions to plastic pollution falls far short. A meager 9% of all the plastic waste ever generated has been recycled. Current projections show plastic production tripling by 2050, far outpacing recycling and resulting in more plastic in the ocean. Recycling alone is not enough to solve the plastics crisis.

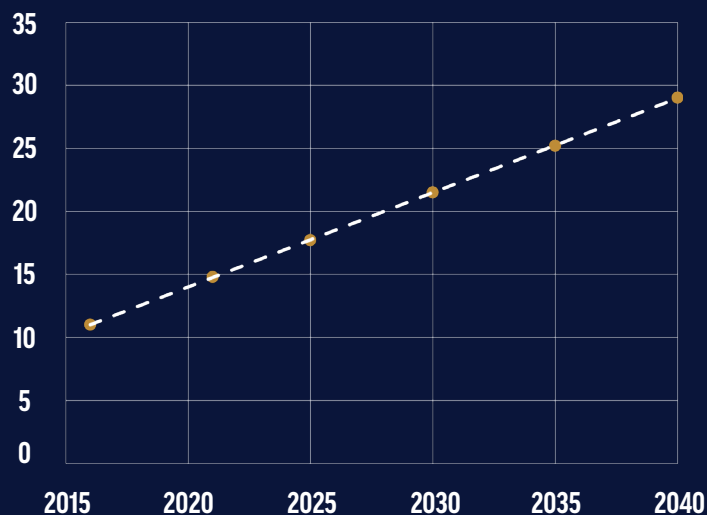
To stop plastic from entering our oceans, we must reduce the amount of single-use plastic being produced.

Companies need to dramatically reduce the amount of unnecessary single-use plastic they are producing and using and offer consumers plastic-free choices for their products.

Without immediate changes to the way companies produce and use plastics, the amount of plastic pollution annually entering the oceans will triple by 2040.

Plastic Waste Projected to Enter the Ocean From Land-Based Sources

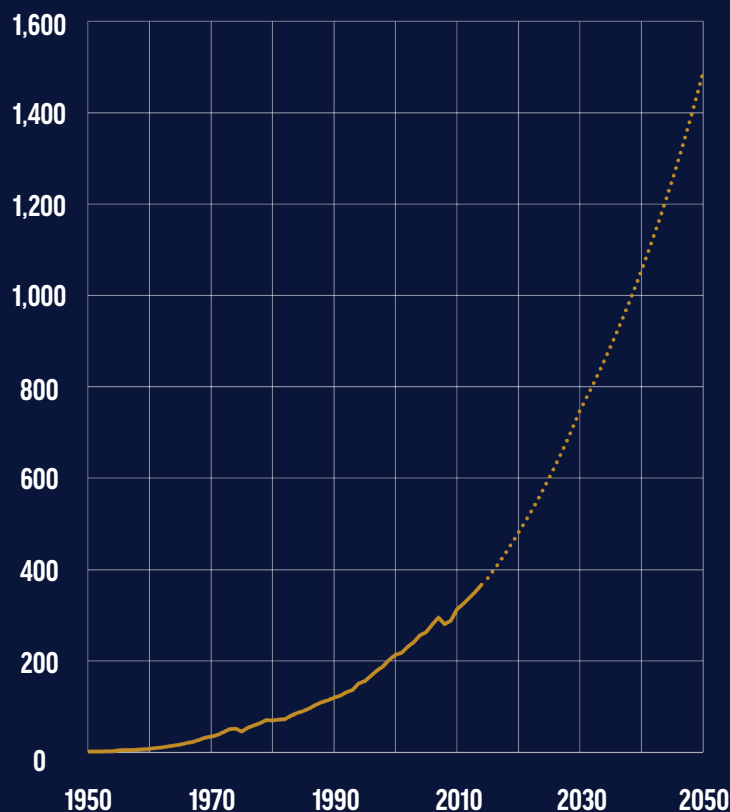
(Million Metric Tons)



Source: Pew Charitable Trusts, *Breaking the Plastic Wave: Top Findings for Preventing Plastic Pollution*

Projected Increase in Global Plastic Production

(Million Metric Tons)



Source: Data from 1950–2015 from (Geyer, Jambeck, and Law 2017) supplemental material and projected numbers from Ellen MacArthur Foundation's annual industry growth (World Economic Forum, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, and McKinsey & Company 2016)