

Plastic Pollution

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Plastic pollution is a problem not only here in Malta but all around the world. Plastic takes years to break down. When it breaks down the plastic turns into smaller and smaller molecules of plastic that unfortunately is still present in the environment around us.

What are the effects of plastic pollution?

The effects of plastic pollution damage animals and wildlife but it also affects humans. When an animal like a fish or another animal eats plastic and we eat the animal, the fish would not be so good and it might affect our health.

We should be careful where we throw our trash and we should reduce, reuse, or recycle items made of plastic. For example, at school, the students can reuse their lunch box daily instead



Figure 1 https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/6426/production/_101683652_ngm_0618_plastics_007.jpg

of using a plastic bag to keep their lunch. Sadly, many animals die or lose their homes because of plastic pollution. UNESCO (2017) stated that each year, over one million marine animals (including mammals, fish, sharks, turtles, and birds) are being killed due to plastic debris in the ocean. There are many diverse types of pollution in our world, but plastic pollution is amongst one of the biggest pollution problems in the entire world.

What are people doing to stop plastic pollution?

People are doing their best to stop plastic pollution by cleaning up beaches and creating organisations based on cleaning up the ocean. Some of these organisations include 'The

Ocean Cleanup', '4 Ocean' and 'The Ocean Conservancy'. There is also another organisation called 'Team Seas' that is working to clean up plastic and trash in the ocean.

Before and after beaches



A beach in India was filled with plastic until the locals decided to clean it up. The beach looked pristine in two years of cleaning up.

Many people all over the world are trying to save the ocean from plastic pollution but sadly, some beaches are filled with trash and the locals do not care enough to clean up the beach. As I said earlier, many nonprofit organisations are trying to clean up beaches and the ocean.

Figure 2 <https://s3.amazonaws.com/RIProjects/PRDImages/60db62e5-2ee4-4292-b31b-a26ba4103bc5-47847a8e-5b56-41e0-b812-899f990cc4d4-f71dfe81-403f-49df-b049-1f2b1a750e0b-133453738-0-MainPhoto>

In some countries, the pollution has gotten so bad that they had to ban certain plastic items such as cotton buds. Luckily, in Malta we have water treatment centers so polluted water does not go into the sea. Some examples of these water treatment centers are Ċumnija Sewage Treatment Plant and Ta' Barkat Sewage Treatment Plant.

The entire world is trying its best to stop plastic pollution to save animals and save beaches all over the world. According to a 2020 study from the Pew Charitable Trusts, more than 24 trillion pounds of plastic is being dumped into oceans every year. In two years' time, it would be 48 trillion pounds of plastic dumped into the ocean, which is very worrying. That is an extremely concerning number as the amount of plastic we see in the ocean every day is hugely high. It is incredibly sad to see dead marine life on the beach or in the water who died by eating plastic.

Everyone in the world hopes that the amount of plastic in the ocean is reduced as soon as possible. Let us work together to clean the ocean and beaches all over the world to save sea animals and nature in general and use less plastic.

References:

1. UNESCO (2017) Facts and figures on marine pollution. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/ioc-oceans/focus-areas/rio-20-ocean/blueprint-for-the-future-we-want/marine-pollution/facts-and-figures-on-marine-pollution/> (Accessed: 5th April 2022)
2. PEW (2020) Research Finds Plastic Flows Into the Ocean Expected to Triple by 2040—but Immediate Action Could Stem Tide by More Than 80%. Available at: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/about/news-room/press-releases-and-statements/2020/07/23/research-finds-plastic-flows-into-the-ocean-expected-to-triple-by-2040> (Accessed: 5th April 2022)